



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TIPPING POINT: PLAN CALLS FOR RENEWED COMMITMENT TO CONSERVE THE GRAND CAYMAN BLUE IGUANA

2nd August 2021 – Blue Iguana Conservation (BIC), is launching the new Strategic Species Action Plan (SSAP) 2021-2026, a document that outlines all necessary objectives to help conserve Grand Cayman’s most iconic reptile species.

BIC Project manager Luke Harding explains, “Based on the expert evaluation of the best scientific knowledge available to date, this plan presents the current understanding of the challenges for future conservation efforts and the primary actions needed to work towards long term success”.

The development of this five-year plan involved the input from on- and off-island project partners* whose representatives attended two workshops (in 2019 and 2021) and brought together thirty years of research and knowledge for the compilation of this plan. Despite this being an iconic species and renowned reptile conservation project, the global interest in Grand Cayman’s blue iguanas does not reflect the awareness of their current status or conservation threats.

Support for the plan is offered by the Hon. Wayne Panton, Premier of the Cayman Islands: “I am delighted to see such thoughtful strategy behind the future conservation of the blue iguanas. Let us all see this plan as a platform to reaffirm our dedication to this iconic species that is so symbolic of Cayman”.

This action plan builds upon the milestones achieved by dedicated long-term commitments from the project partners since 1991, who saved this species from the brink of extinction and who have brought conservation efforts to this current and crucial tipping point. The success of this programme has meant that there is, once again, a wild population, enabling a second opportunity to ensure that wild blue iguanas are here for future generations to cherish - but we must act now. A renewed, island-wide commitment is required to achieve the objectives, mitigate the emerging threats and provide the required funding to support the efforts outlined in this plan, all of which will guarantee that the project’s remarkable history will not have been in vain.

In summary, Project Founder, Frederic J. Burton stated, “Let’s not make any mistake – we’ve got them from next to nothing to about 1,000 in the wild. We bought them time, but until we solve the main causes of their original decline, we can’t say we have saved them”.



***Major BIC Partners:** Department of Environment, St. Matthew's University School of Veterinary Medicine, Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park (Tourism Attraction Board), Wildlife Conservation Society (Bronx Zoo), San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance Institute of Conservation Research, International Reptile Conservation Foundation, Mississippi State University, Harrisburg University and IUCN Iguana Specialist Group.

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About the National Trust for the Cayman Islands

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands is a non-governmental organisation whose mandate under the National Trust Law (2010 Revision) includes the preservation of the historic, natural and maritime heritage of the Cayman Islands for present and future generations.

About Blue Iguana Conservation

The Blue Iguana Recovery Programme began in 1990 with only 30 dedicated blue iguanas and the primary goal to restore the wild population to 1,000 individuals, encouraging viable population in the long term. Having met its primary goal in 2018, the project formally transitioned to Blue Iguana Conservation in 2019 with a new focus of sustainably conserving the native species of Grand Cayman.

About the National Trust's Environmental Programme

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands' Environmental Programme was founded on the concept that the protection of native plants and animals is best achieved by protecting the natural areas in which they depend.

About the National Trust Conservation Programme



The National Trust for the Cayman Islands' conservation programme strives to protect Cayman's native species and the habitats in which they live, and includes the endemic blue iguana of Grand Cayman, the Sister Islands rock iguana and Cayman's native bat species.