



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### ***Darwin Plus R10* funding secured to help Cayman's threatened wildlife**

**26<sup>th</sup> August 2022** – The National Trust for the Cayman Islands (NTCI) has recently been awarded ***Darwin Plus R10*** funding to undertake a three-year project on Grand Cayman, in partnership with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), to assist in preserving endemic threatened wildlife populations through effective protected area management.

The pressures on Grand Cayman's natural environment remains high, and populations of endemic wildlife are largely restricted to within protected areas. This Darwin-funded project will strengthen on-island capacity to support effective management of these key sites through staff development, community engagement and a trained volunteer/student network, ensuring that the legacy of the grant work goes on far longer than the duration of funding.

Blue Iguana Conservation Manager and lead author of the grant, Mr. Luke Harding said, "We are extremely excited to have been successful with this application and now have a unique opportunity to develop staff, volunteers and students through training to help them play an essential role in the protection of these important wildlife areas and increase the expertise and experience for future roles and positions on Island."

The essential research and monitoring proposed throughout the three-year grant will fill knowledge gaps, including key endemic wildlife population sizes, threats, habitat use and establishing sustainable invasive species management, to target actions and outcomes that effectively safeguard these important wildlife areas for species, such as the iconic Cayman parrot and Grand Cayman blue iguana.

"Our protected areas, such as the Colliers Wilderness Reserve and Salina Reserve, provide vital habitat for so many important species and we need to better understand these areas and how species use them to ensure we can expand and protect these important areas and others like them across our islands", says Luke Harding, Blue Iguana Conservation Manager.

The project commenced on 1 April 2022. Further information and updates will be shared throughout the grant when applicable.



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## **MEDIA CONTACT**

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## **About the National Trust for the Cayman Islands**

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands is a non-governmental organization 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 the Blue Iguana Conservation Programme**

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 Blue Iguanas, encouraging viable population in the long-term. Having met its primary goal in 2018, the initiative formally transitioned to the *Blue Iguana Conservation Programme* in 2019 with a new focus of sustainably conserving the native species of Grand Cayman.

## **About the National Trust's Environmental Programme**

1946The 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.



### **About the National Trust Historic Preservation Programme**

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands introduced the launching of its ***Historic Preservation Fund*** at its Annual General Meeting in September 2021 for the purpose of inviting increased support of its continuing efforts to encourage the preservation and protection of historic homes and buildings for present and future generations of the Cayman Islands.