



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Lady Pop Heralds the Start of Blue Iguana Nesting Season**

**1 May 2024** – "Lady Pop", a 33-year-old Caymanian Blue Iguana, has begun excavations for her nest, heralding the start of the nesting season. Lady Pop and her 17-year-old husband, Iggy Stardust, have produced large clutches of eggs in the past, with 22 eggs being laid last year.

The mating season has been active within the Blue Iguana Conservation (BIC) facility and in the wild populations. For the health of the species, Iguanas in the facility are carefully paired according to their genetics under the instruction of long-time geneticist Tandora Del Grant. The wild population's mating is based on male dominance and BIC staff have been busy rehabilitating those injured in the fray. One of the facility's most beloved iguanas, "Forrest," was injured during a territorial dispute, but thankfully, after a stay at the veterinarian's, he is recovering quickly.

Due in part to the program's success, nest digging is creating its own set of issues within the Botanic Park as the Children's Area is favoured by some of the free-roaming ladies. The iguanas' natural need to protect the nest can lead to confrontations but BIC staff are working to help them find more suitable nest locations. Wild roaming females from the Salina and Colliers Reserves are also being reported crossing the Queen's Highway and East End Road to find sandy nesting locations near the sea. Motorists are asked to keep a close eye out for them and additional warning signs have been placed to remind drivers in the area.

The Blue Iguana Conservation facility is fully occupied and releases will soon take place to make room for the new hatchlings. This effort will include 2-year-old participants in the Head Start program in which iguanas are raised to a size that gives them the best chance of survival against native and introduced predators. It will also include some of the larger and older animals who have done their stint in the breeding program, keeping the genetic dynamics maintained.

The world will celebrate International Blue Iguana Day on Wednesday, May 8<sup>th</sup> to be commemorated at a Blue Iguana Family Fun Day at the Blue Iguana Conservation facility located at the Botanic Park on Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, from 10:00am-4:00pm. This family-friendly event will offer an opportunity to feed the blue iguanas, learn more about our iconic blues, free tours at the Blue Iguana Conservation facility, amazing photo opportunities, and kids can enjoy being an 'Iguana Scientist' for the day. The event will also include special guest speaker Ian Redmond, OBE, wildlife biologist and conservationist, renowned for his work with apes and



elephants. Tickets can be purchased on the day of the event at the Visitor Centre at the Botanic Park, Adults \$10, Children \$5.

The Blue Iguana Conservation program was started in 1990 to prevent the extinction of the Grand Cayman Blue Iguana. This beautiful reptile has become an iconic symbol of these islands with its likeness being used in almost every way imaginable, from our driver's licenses to tourism advertising. The program is highly dependent on the support of the community, so please come out and celebrate with us on Blue Iguana Family Day!

**ENDS**

#### **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**



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.

### **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.