



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: 8th May 2024

National Trust hosts intimate screening of “Saving the Blues”

Members of the National Trust hosted an intimate screening this week of ‘Saving the Blues’ a film produced by the Cayman Islands Government Office in the UK, and which first aired during London Climate Action Week 2023. A small group of 50 invited guests, who were also able to sample Blue Iguana gin cocktails during the evening, which included Her Excellency Governor Jane Owen, Deputy Premier Andre Ebanks and Minister of Sustainability and Climate Resiliency Katherine Ebanks-Wilks.

“Saving the Blues” chronicles the inspiring journey of Fred Burton, a young British Scientist, who dedicated himself to the monumental task of saving the blue iguana, a virtually prehistoric creature endemic to Grand Cayman. The documentary highlights the critical conservation efforts led by Fred Burton, the Department of Environment, and the National Trust for the Cayman Islands, which resulted in the recovery of the blue iguana species from critically endangered to endangered status. Presented by Dr Tasha Ebanks Garcia, Representative to the UK for the Cayman Islands and featuring interviews with Fred Burton, team members from the Blue Iguana Conservation Facility, and global thought leaders, the film underscores the importance of preserving planetary species from a biodiversity perspective.

The keynote speaker for the evening was Ian Redmond OBE, a distinguished wildlife biologist and conservationist, who is currently on island attending screenings of the film and visiting schools. With over 45 years of experience in wildlife conservation, Ian is renowned for his work with great apes and elephants, spanning research, filming, tourism, and conservation advocacy. His impactful contributions to environmental conservation have earned him international recognition and respect.

Ian Redmond spoke eloquently about the similarities between Diane Fossey saving the critically endangered Mountain Gorillas and the Cayman Islands’ rescue of the Blue Iguana. He explained that everything is connected and if we look after our indigenous species we are not only saving them, but through their very existence the iguanas propagate indigenous plants by spreading seeds and in this way help to maintain the environments in which they and many



other creatures thrive. He stressed the value of our remaining areas of virgin forest and wetlands and all the plants and creatures that live in them, who together help sustain each other in balance to make our beautiful beaches, crystal clear waters, corals and sea life.

Following the screening of *Saving the Blues*, there followed a lively and engaging Q&A panel session featuring Ian Redmond, Fred Burton and Sangeeta Laudus (co-producer of *Saving the Blues* and interviewer featured in the documentary). Other speakers of the evening included Melanie Carmichael, Chair of the National Trust Council and Frank Roulstone, Director of the National Trust.

Ian Redmond has been visiting schools all this week and will address a free to the public screening of 'Saving the Blues' event to celebrate International Blue Iguana Day at The Ritz-Carlton, Andiamo at 6:30pm this evening (Wednesday 8 May).

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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.

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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.