

Aliens of Kamayca

A newsletter on non-indigenous species in Jamaica

WATCH OUT FI DIS!

The pet trade is the mechanism through which many non-native animals have made their way to the Jamaican shores. The common Green Iguana (*Iguana iguana*) is one such species introduced via this pathway. The intentional or unintentional release of these Iguanas can lead to the uncontrollable explosion of the population. The implications for indigenous/native iguanas are great as these non-native animals may transfer diseases and compete for food and breeding habitats.

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This **Green** is
Not In!
(*Iguana iguana*)

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(*Iguana iguana* &
Anolis garmani)

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THIS **GREEN** IS NOT IN !



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Adorned in bright green with black bands on its tail, the Green Iguana (*Iguana iguana*) is an exotic beauty and a popular choice for pet lovers. They have a strict salad diet (herbivores) and enjoy dining on shrubs, trees, orchids, figs, mangoes, berries amongst other delicious plants. However, the Green Iguana may escape the confinements of their home/cage or released intentionally by their owners; this is when they become **BAD NEWS!**

In the wild one may observe these non-native creatures glaring down from a shady palm tree or wriggling quickly across the road. The scaly green reptiles are excellent swimmers, and can also be found hanging off of both trees and buildings near the water. The status of the wild population in Jamaica is unknown, however, the Green Iguana may compete for resources with the 'Critically Endangered (CR)' endemic Jamaican Iguana (*Cyclura collei*), if their ranges overlap in the future.

Native Range: Central and South America and parts of the Caribbean

Invasive Range: Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands, Florida, Texas, and Hawaii

Status in Jamaica: Introduced through the Pet Trade.
Not currently categorized as invasive



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Aliens of Xamayca

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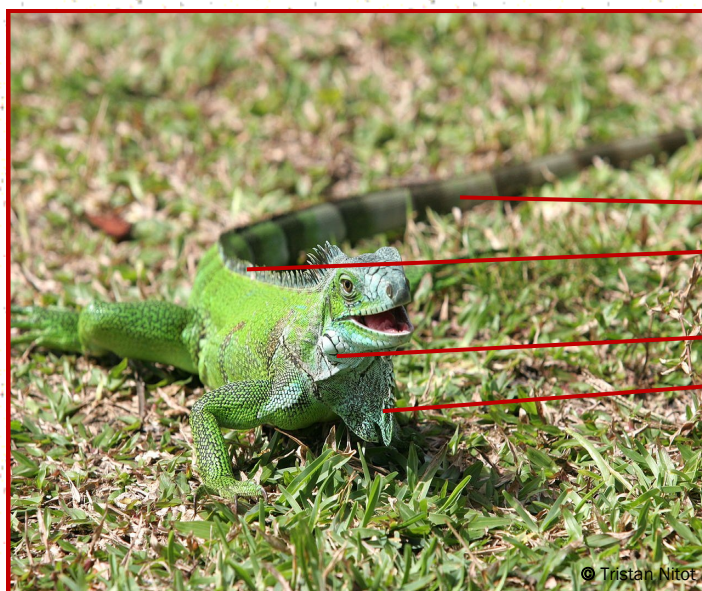
WE ARE NOT RELATED !!

The "Green Lizard" (*Anolis garmani*) or otherwise called 'Saw Back' is sometimes mistaken for the a small Green Iguana (*Iguana iguana*) due to its size, colour and spines along its back. These two species are not related, they are found in different families and have distinct differences in their physical features.

GET THE FACTS

- *Anolis garmani* is endemic to Jamaica
- It is in the Family Dactyloidae
- It is commonly called Jamaican Anole, Saw Back and Green Lizard
- It feeds on insects and other lizards
- It is a large arboreal/ tree dwelling lizard
- It has emerald green to black coloration

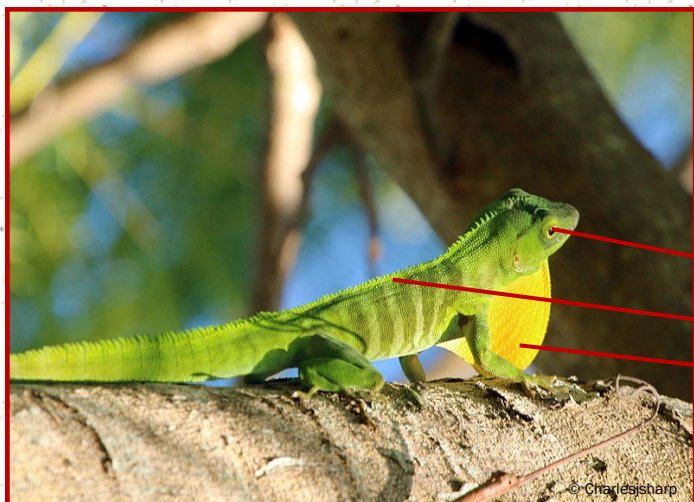
- *Iguana iguana* was introduced to Jamaica
- It is in the Family Iguanidae
- It is commonly called Green Iguana
- The Green Iguana is a herbivore (eats plants)
- They are both arboreal and terrestrial
- It has a bright green colour and then becoming more uniform grayish green in colour with age.



THIS IS HOW YOU CAN IDENTIFY ME

I can grow up to 2m in length and you may see me hanging out in a tree or basking on the ground. I have;

- A long, tapering variably ringed tail
- A dorsal crest of robust dermal spines running from my neck to tail
- Large scales on each side of my head
- A prominent hanging dewlap under my throat



THIS IS HOW YOU CAN IDENTIFY ME

I can grow up to 47 cm in length and you may see me in the canopy of trees. I have;

- A yellow colour around my eyes
- A spiny crest along my neck and back
- A yellow with a tint of orange dewlap under my throat

MENACE TO THE ENVIRONMENT; INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE!

On the small island of Grand Cayman, the Green Iguana population has increased drastically over the last decade from a few individuals to hundreds of thousands. The Green Iguana has great economic implications; it is known to impact agriculture, infrastructure, tourism and biodiversity within its invasive range. In Puerto Rico, the invasive lizard is documented to cause damage to road infrastructure and also cause erosion when it burrows into the ground (Figure 1). It is also known to short-circuit power lines in the cities. In Florida, Puerto Rico and the Bahamas; they are also known airport safety hazards. The impacts of the Green Iguana on biodiversity and their invasion as been documented to result also in the mangrove mortality (Figure 2).



Figure 1: Damage to road infrastructure caused by Green Iguana nesting in Puerto Rico; undermining of erected structures (Left) and road collapse (right). Photographed by Carlos A. Rodriguez Gomez



Figure 2: Red Mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*) mortality caused by the Green Iguana damage to leaves, branches and trunks. Mangrove patch on the onset of Iguana herbivory (left), six months after onset showing visible signs of mangrove mortality (middle), and 12 months after first sign of herbivory showing nearly 100% mangrove mortality (right). Photographed by Alberto Lopez Torres.

Contributor: Samantha Grant, NEPA

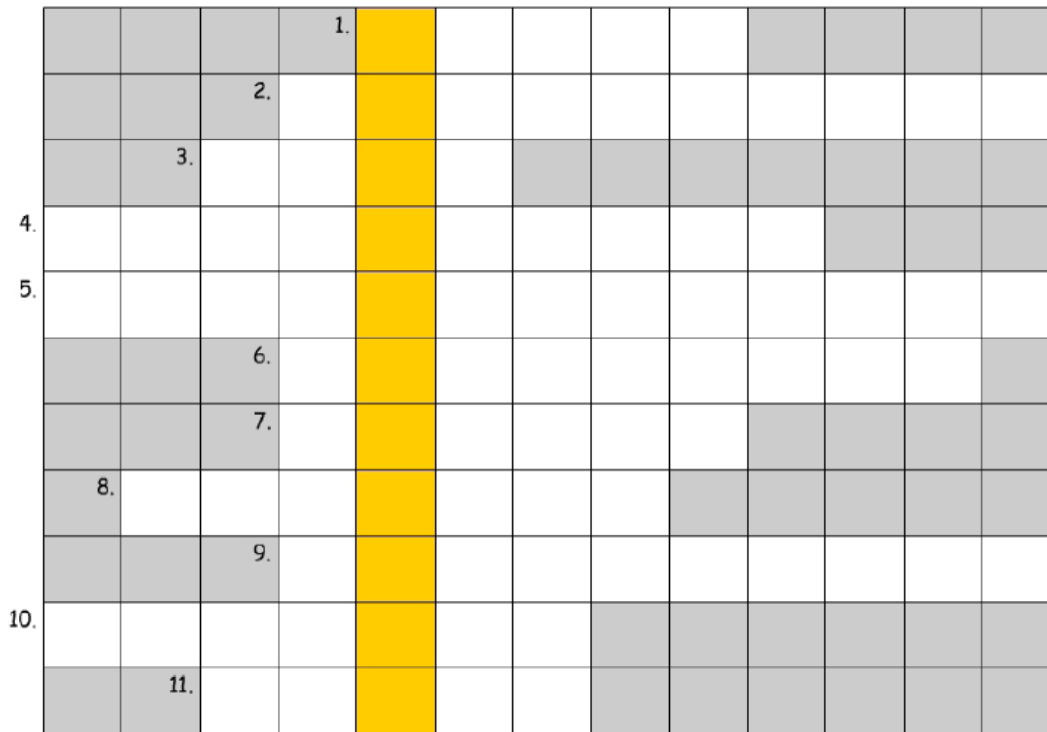
References

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Children's Corner

Can you complete the environment crossword?

Read the clues and unjumble the words!



1. We live on planet **hErat**.
2. The panda, tiger and polar bear are **dangerneed** species.
3. We must **asev** these animals from extinction.
4. Farmers use **icidepests** to kill insects.
5. Cutting down trees in forests is called **stationforede**.
6. Factory smoke, chemical waste, cars and rubbish cause **llopution**.
7. Wind turbines and solar panels are alternative forms of **genery**.
8. Global **ingmraw** is making the world hotter.
9. Please put plastic, metal and paper in **eringcycl** bins.
10. Foods produced naturally are called **cinagro** foods.
11. We cannot live without fresh, clean, drinking **artwe**.

