In Memory of the Seven Blues

Samantha Hicks
Blue Iguana Recovery Program

JOHN BINNS

Sara's service to the Program began in 1992. She had been caught in the East End as a youngster several years before and we estimate that she was born in 1985. Sara was the first founder female in the Program and had bred successfully with many males, producing 49 young. She was the Grand Dame of the captive facility. Dignified and self-contained, she was never aggressive yet never overtly friendly, just warily tolerant of our presence. Sara's contribution to the Program and the survival of her species was invaluable. She was digging a nest when she was set upon and beaten to death.

JOHN BINNS

Jessica, born in 1993, was the daughter of Sara and Zadok. Like her brother Pedro, she developed minor eye problems that rendered her a little slower than most iguanas. This factor added to the impression that she was the gentlest and sweetest of creatures. She bred successfully with Daniel and Digger and produced 23 young. She was always ready for attention and very responsive to voices, making her an easy target for her attackers. Jessica somehow managed to survive the initial attack and fought for her life for over 24 hours before she succumbed.

SAMANTHA HICKS

Eldemire was born to Mr. Blue and QE in 1990. He was a big beast, but gentle, easily identifiable by the underbite that showed off his sharp upper teeth, ironic for such a meek soul. With his long dorsal spines and gargoyle-like features, Eldemire looked like a scraggly old man and never failed to attract attention from touring visitors. Although not filled with machismo like his younger brother Digger, Eldemire did sire five young with Sara in 1995. He was dignified despite his peculiarities, and had warmed to humans in recent years, unfortunately making him all the easier to target. Eldemire's remains were mutilated and discarded.

CRAIG PELKE

Digger touched thousands of people's lives. He was naturally friendly and was our greatest ambassador. He was born in 1994, the offspring of Mr. Blue and QE. His first keepers named him Digger because he used to dig into a plant pot in his cage and hide from them. Digger was the most loving and inquisitive iguana; he would do almost anything for anybody, especially if there was a flower or a Noni fruit involved in the bargain. His great love for people likely contributed to his death. Rather than being afraid of strangers with evil intent, he probably welcomed their company.

SAMANTHA HICKS

Pedro was the son of Sara and brother to Jessica and was born in 1993. Pedro was a crowd pleaser. He was capable of flushing up to the most vivid and beautiful shades of blue, so that one of the most common comments made about him was that he didn't look real. Like Jessica, he had minor eye issues. He adored being stroked. He was totally unable to defend himself and completely unprepared for violence from trusted human beings. Pedro was very proudly sponsored by Kenrick Webster and was such a gentle role model for his species that he was chosen to meet The Earl of Wessex on his last visit.

SAMANTHA HICKS

Matthias didn't succumb to his terrible injuries for several days, behavior typical of this proud little Blue. Matthias was larger than life and we would have been interested in seeing if he would have achieved great physical size; born in 2001, at seven years he was a mere youngster and should have had at least 60 more years to grow. Son of Nathanial and Ruth, Matthias was very handsome, a perfectly formed animal with a row of very neat spines and a bright blue flush. He appeared to know his own worth and cockily taunted much larger iguanas from inside his earlier wire enclosure. He spent many happy hours dangling his legs from his favorite perch on a Smokewood branch.

FRED BURTON

Yellow was our movie star and cover boy. He was born to Dempster and a wild male in 1995. His eager and sometimes rather aggressive style earned him the Botanic Park's southern kingdom, where he dominated 35 acres, intersecting with the territories of six females, until he was deposed by Forrest in 2004–5. His favorite mate, Sapphire, used to walk far from her territory to visit him, but he fell on hard times as a King-in-Exile, and was eventually returned to the captive facility for a chance to recuperate. He was just beginning to look like his former self when his life was violently ended. We like to think that he has joined Sapphire, who was taken from us by dogs in 2006.