ROSTISLAV STACH

Lesser Antillean Iguanas (*Iguana delicatissima*) are the subject of new educational signs provided by the IRCF for use on St. Eustatius. This adult was photographed at the National Parks Visitor Center.

CONSERVATION ALERT

New Iguana Signs and T-shirts Raise Awareness on Statia

Nicole Esteban, Manager

St. Eustatius National Parks

Photographs by the author except where indicated.

In April 2009, the St. Eustatius National Parks Foundation (STENAPA) received a generous gift from the International Reptile Conservation Foundation (IRCF), an organization that has supported the Foundation's conservation and education efforts in the past. In 2005, the IRCF was responsible for a set of signs featuring the conservation status of Statia's iguanas. Those were erected around the island, but had become faded due to exposure to sun and rain. The IRCF kindly offered to replace them.

Fundraising efforts by IRCF members in the United States managed to raise sufficient funds to not only replace the signs, but to improve on their quality. Additionally, the IRCF sent T-shirts that were presented to the Commissioner for Environment, all five Tourism Office staff, the nine members of the STENAPA board, and eight staff members. The Nustar Statia Oil Terminal provided

Signs have been placed strategically all over the island; this one is near the Lynch Plantation School.

A new sign at the entrance to Dutch Plumbing Services in the business district.

VICTORIA H. ZERO

This iguana (indicated by the circle) seems to be seeking protection from the old sign that had been posted on the lower slopes of the Smoke Alley cliffs. The old signs had faded with exposure to sun and rain. Whether the iguanas approve of the new signs remains to be seen.

shipping for the signs that gently remind the general public, residents and visitor alike, that our Lesser Antillean Iguanas (*Iguana delicatissima*) have disappeared from many nearby islands and are protected by law on Statia.

The signs have definitely increased awareness about the endangered status of our iguanas. Residents now phone the STENAPA office to alert staff of iguanas messing up their yards, in response to which the offending iguanas are relocated to a safer location. In the past, many individuals would have simply killed and eaten them. Also, increasing evidence speaks to the growth of the iguana population. Five iguanas (juveniles through mature males and females) occupy the yard at the National Park Visitor Centre, and reports suggest that numbers are growing elsewhere on the island as well.

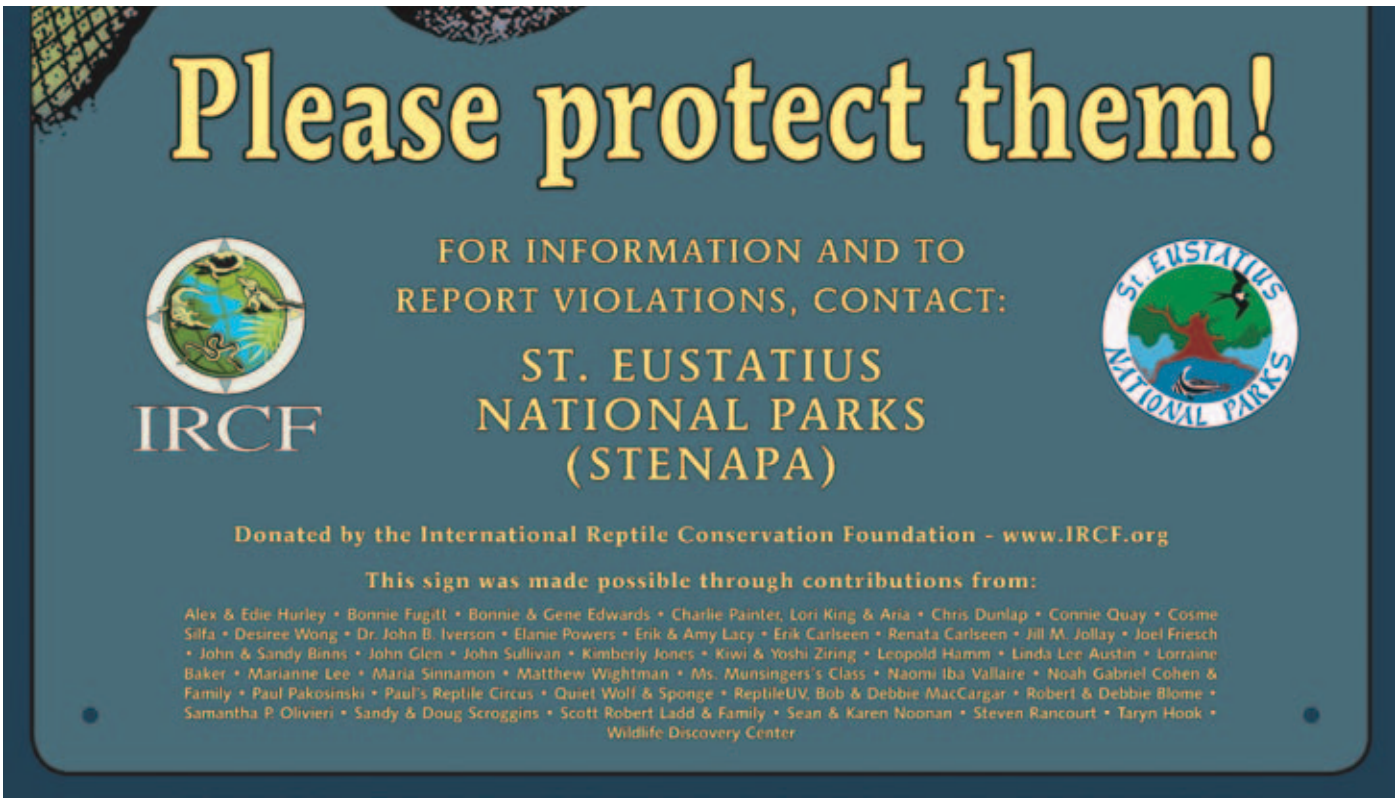
Iguana T-shirts are a big hit and have elicited many positive comments. Here, Nadio Spanner and Carlton van Putten of the STENAPA staff show off their new shirts.

MICHELE FAIRES

STENAPA staff sporting their new t-shirts in front of the National Parks Foundation office (from left: Nicole Esteban, Violet Busby, Hannah Madden, Jessica Berkel, Tadzio Bervoets, and Walter Blair).

Chloe and Leon Esteban with one of the new signs at the entrance to the Quill National Park.

Another one of the new iguana signs at the entrance of the Miriam C. Schmidt Botanical Garden.



The new signs list the names of donors who contributed funds.

IRCF

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