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Grand Cayman Blue Iguana takes step back from extinction

20 October 2012 | News story

The Grand Cayman Blue Iguana (*Cyclura lewisi*) has taken a formal step back from extinction this year. The announcement comes with the latest update to The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™, which was released in India this week by The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

In 2002, there were only about 10 to 25 [Grand Cayman Blue Iguanas](#) in the wild and as a result it was listed as Critically Endangered on The IUCN Red List. Today, due to the conservation efforts of the Blue Iguana Recovery Programme, the wild population of the Grand Cayman Blue Iguana has risen to an estimated 750 individuals and has been downlisted to Endangered.

"In IUCN Red List terms, Endangered is the best we can ever hope for as far as the Grand Cayman Blue Iguana is concerned," says **Fred Burton, member of the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) Iguana Specialist Group and Programme Director of the Blue Iguana Recovery Programme.** "Human impacts on Grand Cayman are now so extensive that there just isn't scope for these iguanas to regain numbers in the tens of thousands. However, we are confident that we will achieve our long term goal of restoring at least 1,000 Grand Cayman Blue Iguanas to the wild."

The newly published IUCN Red List assessment shows conservation of the Grand Cayman Blue Iguana is taking a step in the right direction. The Blue Iguana Recovery Programme involves habitat protection; captive breeding and release; research and monitoring; as well as education and outreach, and is an example of how conservation can work successfully. However, the Grand Cayman Blue Iguana is still threatened by free-roaming dogs and cats as well as by habitat loss so conservation must continue.

"The Blue Iguana Recovery Programme deserves congratulations as the downlisting of the Grand Cayman Blue Iguana is a fantastic achievement," says **Jean-Christophe Vié, Deputy Director, IUCN Global Species Programme.** "When people with dedication and good knowledge are supported, success can be expected and this news will boost the morale of people around the world who are working hard to improve the status of other species."

For more information please contact:

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RELATED LINK

- [Blue Iguana Recovery Programme](#)
- [IUCN SSC Iguana Specialist Group](#)
- [Read the IUCN Red List assessment](#)



A male Grand Cayman Blue Iguana (*Cyclura lewisi*) at his peak
Photo: John Binns