

# Crested iguana breeding plans for Malolo

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Wild baby iguanas found on Malolo. Picture: SUPPLIED/AHURA

**Update: 3:33PM** WHAT scientists believe to be a rare baby iguana was recently discovered on the island of Malolo Levu in Fiji.

And scientists from the San Diego Zoo have moved this iguana to a captive environment at Ahura Resorts to protect it from predators.



The Fijian Crested iguana was found during a recent population survey of a remnant dry forest area.

It had been considered extinct on Malolo Island since 2010.

In an electronic exchange with Ahura Resorts' Tracey Leitch, Fiji Times Online established that in August earlier this year, Ahura Resorts released three critically endangered Fijian crested iguana babies back into the wild on Malolo Island.

Ongoing conservation initiatives to benefit this species at Likuliku Lagoon Resort and Malolo Island Resort, jointly managed under the Ahura Resorts banner, provide a spark of hope for the iguanas' future.

The project involves a local and international team of hoteliers, researchers, and environmental educators, including the US Geological Survey, San Diego Zoo Global, Taronga Zoo, and the Mamanuca Environment Society.

Visiting scientist from the University of Georgia in the US, Adam Clause, had said that the discovery of those baby wild iguanas was a moment of elation for them.

"They represent clear evidence that our team's restoration actions are working. Now that cats and rats have been mostly removed from the Ahura Resorts leases, these iguanas can now breed unmolested. After a health assessment, morphological analysis, and DNA sampling, we gave these baby iguanas a clean bill of health."

These stakeholders are committed to successful captive breeding of this species in the near future, with plans to begin churning out babies every year, destined to be released back to their natural habitat on Malolo Is.

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