

New species of iguana found after road kill in Dominica

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April 5, 2018



CBN4, DOMINICA — A new and dangerous species of Iguana “the striped tail Iguana” has been identified here on the island of Dominica.

Jeanelle Brisbane, an Ecologist doing voluntary works with the Forestry Wildlife and Parks Division said the iguana was located at Coulibistrie from a road kill.

She said that the striped tail iguana is very close to Dominica’s native iguana and that’s a danger to our native species of Iguana.

“So not only do they compete and they are better competitors than our Iguana but they actually reproduce with our native Iguana’s and when that happens, our native Iguana’s no longer become ours. So that is a threat that is being posed with having this on the island,” Jeanelle Brisbane noted.

When asked about how did the striped tail iguana found itself in Dominica, Brisbane believes that the iguana could have migrated through the sand quarry.

“Well all the other islands surrounding us actually have an established population of the striped tail iguana’s except one offshore island, that’s part of Guadeloupe.”

“So after Maria, this Iguana could have come through containers into our ports, it could have come through the quarry near Coulibistrie where we found this individual. It could have come through private boats as is the case with other islands and sometimes this Iguana spreads to new places because of the pet trade.”

“So there are many options but we think this individual in particular probably got across through the quarry,” Jeanelle Brisbane stated.

The young ecologist laid out some of the steps that are going to be taken with respect to the findings of the striped iguana here on the island.

“Well, this animal, in particular, we are going to first determine how many eggs she has because we found her pregnant.”

“So we haven’t determined how many eggs she has and we are hoping that she came to the island with these eggs, she hasn’t laid already and she’s a newcomer so that there was never a chance for her to lay because that would be another problem on its own.”

“Then we’re going to swab her just to ensure that she didn’t come in with any diseases that could be harmful to any of our species here and then take a blood sample for record-keeping sake,” the Ecologist stated.

Jeanelle further noted that raising awareness is going to be extremely crucial in ensuring that this species does not become a major threat in Dominica.