



Enacting a Regional Recovery Plan for the Lesser Antillean Iguana: an Endangered Ecological Keystone Species

Targeted territories: Anguilla; Saint-Barthélemy; Saint Eustatius

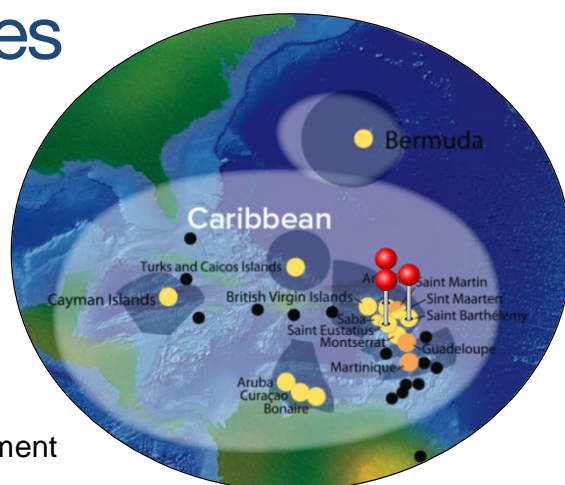
Total project budget: 113,458 Euros

BEST 2.0 grant awarded: 99,454 Euros

Duration: February 2017 – July 2018 (18 months)

Lead organisation: Anguilla National Trust (ANT)

Partner organisation/s: Agence Territoriale de l'Environnement de St. Barthélemy; Saint Eustatius National Parks



Background:

The Endangered Lesser Antillean iguana, *Iguana delicatissima*, is restricted to six island territories in the Lesser Antilles, including Anguilla, St. Barthélemy, and St. Eustatius. On all islands on which it occurs the species is under threat from habitat alteration, land development, predation by rats, cats, dogs, and humans, and, more recently (on most islands), the introduced common green iguana *I. iguana*. Studies from the region suggest that when *I. iguana* is present, *I. delicatissima* is typically replaced by *I. iguana* and *I. iguana* x *I. delicatissima* hybrids within a few decades due to out-competition and interspecific breeding. While country-specific action has been undertaken in Anguilla, Saint-Barthélemy, and Saint Eustatius, given the vulnerability

of each territory's population, a more coordinated and integrated approach to *I. delicatissima* conservation and recovery is essential.

Description of the Project:

This project seeks to establish a platform for strategic species conservation and protection for Anguilla's, St. Barthélemy's, and St. Eustatius' biodiversity, using one of the territories' most at-risk



species (*I. delicatissima*) as an example of how national priorities can be coordinated and can lead to long-term regional conservation benefits. It will provide opportunities for cross-territory learning, knowledge exchange, and capacity building as well as networking amongst front-line conservation agencies in the wider Caribbean region and internationally. Building on national-species and habit-

specific policies, management plans, and biodiversity strategies, and using scientific quantitative and qualitative data to guide action it encourages sustainable management of an endangered species within Key Biodiversity Areas of three different island territories.

Intended results:

- Develop a sub-regional framework for *I. delicatissima* species recovery and conservation.
- Increase regional data on *I. delicatissima* populations.
- Reintroduce *I. delicatissima* to Prickly Pear East, Anguilla to create the territory's first iguana sanctuary.
- Implement standardised bio-security measures targeting *I. iguana* in Anguilla, St. Barthélemy, and St. Eustatius Key Biodiversity Areas.
- Increase sub-regional expertise in *I. delicatissima* conservation.
- Increase national and sub-regional awareness and support for *I. delicatissima* conservation.



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