



Dedicated facility to the care and breeding of
Land Tortoises and West Indies Cyclura Rock
Iguanas

Cyclura Care Sheet: Including, Cuban, Cayman, Rhino, Lewisi, Figginisi and Hybrids

By FITB Sam Pascucci
5/24/21

These animals are active during the day, they are diurnal

Summary: for care and feeding of hatchling Cyclura, I like to put this part first so it is easy for people to refer back to it.

Cage: Minimum of 400 sq. to 1,000 sq inches of floor space for each iguana with basking sites. typically, a 20 gallon fish tank.

Temperature: 75-80F night, 86-96F daytime. 100-105F basking site.

Lighting: Natural sunlight is best or for indoor enclosures full-spectrum UVB producing fluorescent tube or mercury vapor lamp with basking spot lamps. We recommend using a Mega-Ray Mercury Vapor Bulb, 160w mounted 24 inches above one end of the cage.

Food: Daily or every other day feedings recommended until 1 yr. of age, thereafter at least three times per week. Insure that all food is consumed. Provide daily clean water in a small shallow dish.

Spring Mix, Collard Greens, Romaine Lettice, Crated Green and Yellow squash and carrots. Once a week Mazuri Tortoise Chow (You can sub Iguana Chow but we find the Iguanas like the tortoise chow better)



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Main Article:

Substrate: Hatchling and juvenile Iguanas should be kept on a non-particulate substrate to prevent ingestion. I prefer Sand and or dirt mix but this may prove to be troublesome to clean depending on the cage. Other good choices are Newspaper, paper toweling, My Favorite indoor outdoor carpet or better yet reptile carpet made specifically for reptiles. Adults should be kept on dirt or a dirt/sand mixture.

Water: Small, shallow container of fresh water available daily

Lighting and Temperature: UVB is essential for proper growth and health. Cyclura iguanas require 10-14 hours of UVB light a day. This light enables the iguana to produce vitamin D3. The vitamin D produced by UVB metabolizes the calcium in the lizards' diet. This is what makes iguanas' bones hard and without it they usually die.

If you have an animal that has not received the proper UVB light or vitamin supplements the animal will suffer from Metabolic Bone Disease. It is very important to change your UVB light every 6-8 months, after this time the light stops producing adequate UVB. If you use Mega-Ray Mercury Vapor Bulbs they will last for about a year.

Calcium:

Iguanas kept indoors require a calcium and vitamin supplement. This supplement works with the UVB light allowing the lizard to receive the proper amounts of calcium and vitamins. Supplement the baby and hatchling iguanas once a week with a reptile calcium containing Vitamin D3

Temperatures and Humidity: Ambient temps for a Cyclura hatchling or juvenile should range between 80 and 100 degrees. A basking spot of 100 for young Iguanas is ideal. Adults have been known to bask at temperatures approaching 105 degrees.

Humidity requirements can range from 40-75%. As a guide

Temperatures should be Temperature: 75-80F night, 86-96F daytime. 100-105F basking site.

Heating: The best choice for heating and light is to use two light sources. One as an overall UVB lighting source. You can find many of these bulbs in pet stores specifically identified as reptile UVB lights. The second light source should be a spot beam basking light. You should measure the temperature of the light, you can actually measure the body temperature of the animal and adjust the height of the bulb so the temperature does not go above 105 degrees or the animal will burn his skin sitting under the heat. The cage must have a gradient of temperature so the animals can thermal regulate. One side of the cage needs to be the warm side and the other side needs to be the cooler side. A typical gradient would be from about 100 degrees to about 68 degrees. Put your spot beam on one side of the cage.

Indoor Cage size A 20 gallon long aquarium is sufficient for a hatchling thru 6 months. After that use common sense to provide an environment large enough. Remember all Cycluras animals are ground iguanas, build your cage so you have plenty of round space, use rocks and logs to create a terrain to provide comforts and hiding spaces.

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Outdoor cages

Are made complete of wire 1/2" X 1" size holes.

The cage is, 36" X 24" X 24" but of course can be made much bigger.

Just keep the depth close so you can reach in to pick up the animal if you have to.

There should be shade cloth on the top and 70% of the bottom is covered with a plastic running (like the kind people use over rugs)

The door uses they loop lock system , push to open.

Very in inexpensive design and works great, can be made to any size.

We also use wire that is PVC coated to give it a smooth surface which eliminates abrasion on their noises.

Diet and feeding:

Description of Diet: the best diet is a nutritious and varied diet. Staples should include Collard Greens, Mustard Greens, Turnip Greens, Dandelion Greens, Chickory, Watercress, winter squashes, green beans, and parsnips. Add other vegetables to provide variety. Fruit should comprise less than 5% of the diet

We feed our iguanas Collard Greens, Romaine lettuce, Green and Yellow squash, Bananas, grapes. Carrots. Sweet potatoes, Apples and Pears.

When in season some little cherry tomatoes,

All so for verity and when in season we feed them Cantaloupe, Honey dew , strawberries, Butternut squash,

Sometimes as a treat whole wheat bread they love it and by the way if you ever need to medicate an Iguana bread is the best thing to use.

We also feed once or twice a week tortoise chow from Mazuri Item number "5M21", they also make an Iguana Chow but the iguanas don't like it.

I know it sounds strange but, I have been feeding that to my Iguanas for 20 years (when t first came out) before that we used Monkey Chow (5M21) .

They are healthily and breeding.

I know it is not a typical diet but I have been doing that way for about 25 years and I have no animals with any kind of dietary disease.

I have animals that are 25 years old raised on that diet

Supplements, Nutrition and Usage: If a proper diet and good UVB exposure is provided, minimal supplementation is required. A good multivitamin/calcium supplement can be used once a week if desired.

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Adult Cycluras: iguanas can get huge, males usually reaching over 48 inches. They require a lot of floor/roaming space as adults. A minimum cage size would be 4'X8'

Use good judgment these animals can appear tame but never put yourself or a child in a situation where the animal can deliver a serious bite, keep your face and fingers away from its mouth and remember these animals can turn quickly and bite.

They are very strong and can cause a serious injury, pay particular attention to children.

Cleaning and Handling:

The terrarium should be cleaned as necessary. Any fecal matter or left over food should be cleaned out several times a week. The bedding should be completely changed once a month. The inside of the terrarium can be cleaned out with an appropriate reptile cage cleaner. We use a chlorine and Chlorohexidine based cleaning product, make sure you rinse after you can use smell to determine you have rinsed sufficiently. It is important to handle your iguana a few times each day for up to a half an hour. This repeated handling will help your new pet get comfortable with you and its new surroundings. You can handle your iguana for longer periods of time once it has become more accustomed to you and its new habitat. Remember, never pick up your iguana by the tail, it can break off.

Behavior

Many people ask what is the behavior difference between the various species and Sexes. I find the Cuban Iguanas to be inherently the most tame, this would include High Contrast Cuban Iguana, However I have raised some very tame Lewis, Cayman Brac and Rhino iguanas, this also goes for all the Hybrids which we specifically breed for Color and behavior. Inherently I find Rhinos to be the most difficult to work with,

Again if you work with these animal socially every day you can end up with a very tame animal. Males are typically calmer and easier to handle then females.

Males can become somewhat aggressive during the breeding season and females can be very aggressive after they have laid eggs and are protecting their nest.

Females are very aggressive towards males at that time and often we will remove the eggs for incubation and take her out of that cage to "break" her protecting the nest.

We do this only when necessary because the reintroduction of the female back into the males cage can be tricky.



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Other Historical information about Cuban Cyclura iguanas Cuban rock iguana *Cyclura nubila*

*“Coming soon additional Historical information on
Lewisi, Lewisi Hybrids, Cayman Brac Iguanas and Rhinos Iguanas”.*

“**Blue Cubans**” is a hybrid *Cyclura* iguana that is a cross between Cuban and Lewisi iguana. That look like a typical Cuban iguana but have blue tinged skin and Blue highlights. They have the same calm temperament and Pure *Cyclura* Cuban iguanas.

Pure *Cyclura nubila*, also known as the **Cuban rock iguana**, **Cuban ground iguana**, or **Cuban iguana**,^[3] is a species of [lizard](#) of the [iguana](#) family. It is the largest of the West Indian [rock iguanas](#) (genus *Cyclura*), one of the most [endangered](#) groups of lizards. This [herbivorous](#) species with red eyes, a thick tail, and spiked jowls is one of the largest lizards in the [Caribbean](#).

The Cuban iguana is distributed throughout the [rocky southern coastal areas](#) of mainland [Cuba](#) and its surrounding islets with a [feral](#) population thriving on Isla Magueyes, [Puerto Rico](#). It is also found on the [Cayman Islands](#) of [Little Cayman](#) and [Cayman Brac](#), where a separate [subspecies](#) occurs. Females guard their nest sites and often nest in sites excavated by [Cuban crocodiles](#). As a defense measure, the Cuban iguana often makes its home within or near prickly-pear cacti.

Although the wild population is in decline because of [predation](#) by [feral](#) animals and habitat loss caused by human agricultural development, the numbers of iguanas have been bolstered as a result of captive-breeding and other conservation programs. *Cyclura nubila* has been used to study evolution and [animal communication](#), and its captive-breeding program has been a model for other endangered lizards in the Caribbean.

The Cuban rock iguana's [generic](#) name *Cyclura* is derived from the [Ancient Greek](#) *cyclos* (κύκλος) meaning "circular" and *ourá* (οὐρά) meaning "tail", after the thick-ringed tail characteristic of all *Cyclura*.^{[4][5]} [John Edward Gray](#), the British [zoologist](#) who first described the species in 1831 as *Iguana (Cyclura) nubila* or "Clouded Guana", gave it the [specific name](#) *nubila*, [Latin](#) for "cloudy".^{[3][6][7]}

The closest relatives of *Cyclura nubila* are the [Grand Cayman blue iguana](#) (*Cyclura lewisi*) and the [Northern Bahamian rock iguana](#) (*Cyclura cychlura*); [phylogenetic](#) analysis indicates that these three species diverged from a common ancestor three million years ago.^[8]

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Cyclura nubila was previously considered to have three [subspecies](#), the Grand Cayman blue iguana (termed *Cyclura nubila lewisi*), the Lesser Caymans iguana ([Cyclura nubila caymanensis](#)), and the nominate Cuban subspecies (*Cyclura nubila nubila*).^{[3][9]} This [classification](#) was revised after later [mitochondrial DNA](#) analysis and research into the scalation patterns on the heads of Caribbean iguanid lizards (these patterns are unique by species and act as a "fingerprint" of sorts).^{[3][10][11]} The Grand Cayman blue iguana is now recognized as a separate species.^{[3][10][11][12][13][14a]}

ANATOMY AND MORPHOLOGY

The Cuban iguana is a large lizard, with an average body length of 46 centimeters (18 in) from snout to vent (the base of the tail).^[3] Individuals with lengths of more than 1.6 meters (5.2 ft) when measured from the snout to the tip of the tail have been recorded at the wildlife sanctuary within the [Guantanamo Bay Naval Base \(GTMO\)](#), Cuba.^{[15][16]} The species is [sexually dimorphic](#): males are larger than females, and males have enlarged [femoral pores](#) on their thighs, which are used to release [pheromones](#) to attract mates and mark territory.^{[17][18][19]} The skin of male Cuban iguanas ranges in color from dark gray to brick red, whereas that of females is olive green with dark stripes or bands.^[17] In both sexes, limbs are black with pale brown oval spots and solid black feet.^[17] Young animals tend to be dark brown or green with faint darker striping or [mottling](#) in five to ten diagonal transverse bands on the body.^[17] These bands blend in with the body color as the iguana ages.^[17] Both sexes possess a [dewlap](#) (skin hanging below the neck) and a row of [spines](#) running down their back to their thick tail.^[17] Their heads and necks are short and stout, their teeth are solid and broad, and they have powerful jaw muscles.^[20] Their jowls, which grow larger as the animal ages, are covered in spiky protuberances called [tubercles](#).^[20]

The Cuban iguana's eyes have a golden [iris](#) and red [sclera](#). Cuban iguanas have excellent vision and the ability to detect shapes and movement at long distances.^[21] Sensory cells called "double [cones](#)" give them sharp [color vision](#) and enable them to see [ultraviolet](#) wavelengths.^[21] By seeking out locations with more ultraviolet sunlight to bask in, the Cuban iguana optimizes [vitamin D](#) production.^[22] Cuban iguanas have poor low-light vision, because they have few [rods](#) or [photoreceptor cells](#). Like other iguanids, Cuban iguanas have a white photosensory organ on the top of their heads, called the [parietal eye](#).^[21] This "eye" has only a rudimentary retina and lens and cannot form images, but it is sensitive to changes in light and can detect movement.^[21]

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DIET

Like all *Cyclura* species, the Cuban iguana is primarily [herbivorous](#); 95% of its diet consists of the leaves, flowers and fruits from as many as 30 plant species, including the seaside rock shrub ([Rachicallis americana](#)), thistle, prickly pear ([Opuntia stricta](#)), black mangrove ([Avicennia germinans](#)), red mangrove ([Rhizophora mangle](#)), olives, and various grasses.^[23] Aiding in the digestion of this high-[cellulose](#) diet, colonies of [nematodes](#) occupy 50% of the contents of Cuban iguanas' [large intestines](#).^{[17][23]} Cuban iguanas occasionally consume animal matter, and individuals have been observed scavenging the corpses of birds, fish and crabs.^{[24][25]} Researchers on Isla Magueyes observed a single episode of [cannibalism](#) in 2006 when an adult female iguana chased, caught, and ate a hatchling. The researchers wrote that the dense population on Isla Magueyes could have caused this incident.^[26]

Like other herbivorous lizards, the Cuban iguana is presented with a problem for [osmoregulation](#): plant matter contains more [potassium](#) and has less nutritional content per gram than meat so more must be eaten to meet the lizard's metabolic needs. Unlike those of mammals, reptile kidneys cannot concentrate urine to save on water intake. Instead, reptiles excrete toxic nitrogenous wastes as solid uric acid through their [cloaca](#). In the case of the Cuban iguana, which consumes large amounts of vegetation, these excess salt ions are excreted through the [salt gland](#) in the same manner as in birds.^[27]



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MATING AND BEHAVIOR

Cuban iguanas reach sexual maturity at an age of two to three years.^[1] Males are gregarious when mature, but become more aggressive as they age, vigorously defending territories in competition for females.^[23] Females are more tolerant of each other, except after laying their eggs.^{[17][23]}

Mating occurs in April and May and as late as June, females lay single clutches of three to 30 eggs in June or July.^{[1][17][23]} According to field research, females deposit their eggs at the same nesting sites each year.^[23] The nests are built near each other as suitable nesting sites are becoming rare.^{[17][23]} On Cuba's [Isla de Juventud](#), Cuban iguanas nest in pockets of earth exposed to the sun by [Cuban crocodiles](#), after the crocodiles' eggs have hatched.^{[1][17][23]} These nests are separate from where adult iguanas live.^{[1][17][23]} In areas without crocodiles, the iguanas excavate nests in sandy beaches.^[17] At the San Diego Zoo, a female built a nest at the end of a long chamber she excavated in the sand.^[17] She stood near it for weeks, defending it by shaking her head and hissing at anyone who approached; this behavior demonstrated that Cuban iguanas guard their nest sites.^[17] The hatchlings spend several days to two weeks in the nest chamber from the time they hatch to the time they emerge from the nests; dispersing individually after emergence.^[28]

Although Cuban iguanas typically remain still for long periods of time and have a slow lumbering gait due to their body mass, they are capable of quick bursts of speed for short distances. Younger animals are more arboreal and will seek refuge in trees, which they can climb with great agility. The animal is a capable swimmer and will take to nearby water if threatened. When cornered they can bite and lash their tails in defense.^[29]

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DISTRIBUTION AND HABITAT



Map of Cuba

The Cuban iguana is naturally distributed in rocky coastal areas on Cuba and throughout as many as 4,000 islets surrounding the Cuban mainland, including [Isla de la Juventud](#) off the southern coast, which has one of the most robust populations.^{[3][17][24]} Relatively safe populations are found on some islets along the north and south coasts and in isolated protected areas on the mainland.^[1] These include Guanahacabibes Biosphere Reserve in the west, Desembarco del Granma National Park, Hatibonico Wildlife Refuge, Punta Negra-Quemados Ecological Reserve, and Delta del Cauto Wildlife Refuge, all in eastern Cuba.^[24] Because of this wide distribution, accurate information about the number of distinct subpopulations of Cuban iguanas cannot be determined.^{[3][24]} The population on the [US Naval Base](#) at [Guantánamo Bay](#) has been estimated at 2,000 to 3,000 individuals, and the animals are treated well and protected by US forces stationed at the base.^{[1][15][16]} An unusual incident occurred when a detainee in the prison assaulted a guard with a bloody tail torn from a Cuban iguana in May 2005.^{[30][31]}

The subspecies, *Cyclura nubila caymanensis*, is endemic to the "Sister Islands" of [Little Cayman](#) and [Cayman Brac](#). The population on Cayman Brac is less than 50 of these animals and Little Cayman supports 1,500. A feral population of *C. n. caymanensis* has been established on [Grand Cayman](#).^[13]

The Cuban iguana makes its burrow near cacti or thistles, sometimes even within the cactus itself.^[23] These thorny plants offer protection and their fruit and flowers offer the iguanas food.^{[17][23][32]} In areas without cacti, the lizards make their burrows in dead trees, hollow logs, and limestone crevices.^{[17][32]}

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In the mid-1960s a small group of Cuban iguanas was released from a zoo on [Isla Magueyes](#), southwest of [Puerto Rico](#), forming an independent free-ranging feral population.^{[28][33]} As of 2000, there has been talk of removing or relocating this population of iguanas by the US Department of Interior. This feral population is the source for 90% of the captive Cuban iguanas held in private collections and was the source for part of a study on animal communication and evolution conducted by Emilia Martins, a biologist at [Indiana University](#).^[34]

Martins' study compared the head-bob displays from the source population on Cuba with these animals on Isla Magueyes.^[34] The durations and pauses were longer by as much as 350% in the feral population.^[34] In comparison, the blue iguana of Grand Cayman's head-bob displays differed from those of the animals on Cuba by only about 20%.^[34] The rapid change in display structure between the colony of animals on Isla Magueyes and those on Cuba illustrated the potential of small founding population size as a catalyst to evolution with regard to [communication](#) or display.^[34] In this case the difference was by only six generations at most.^[34]

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