

**How to Tell the Difference Between
St. Eustace's Iguana and
the Invasive Green Iguana**

Lesser Antillean Iguana,
Iguana delicatissima

By Elaine A. Powers
Illustrated by Anderson Atlas



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Contributor & Design: John Binns Cover Photo: Robert Powell



Lesser Antillean Iguana (*Iguana delicatissima*)

When you see an iguana, ask: What kind do I see?

What species is that iguana in front of me?

Is it a Green or Stacia's Iguana, one of our own?

Here are identification skills that you should hone.



Do you see a big face scale, as round as can be?

It's below the ear, that's where it will be.

Then it's an invasive Green, get rid of it now.

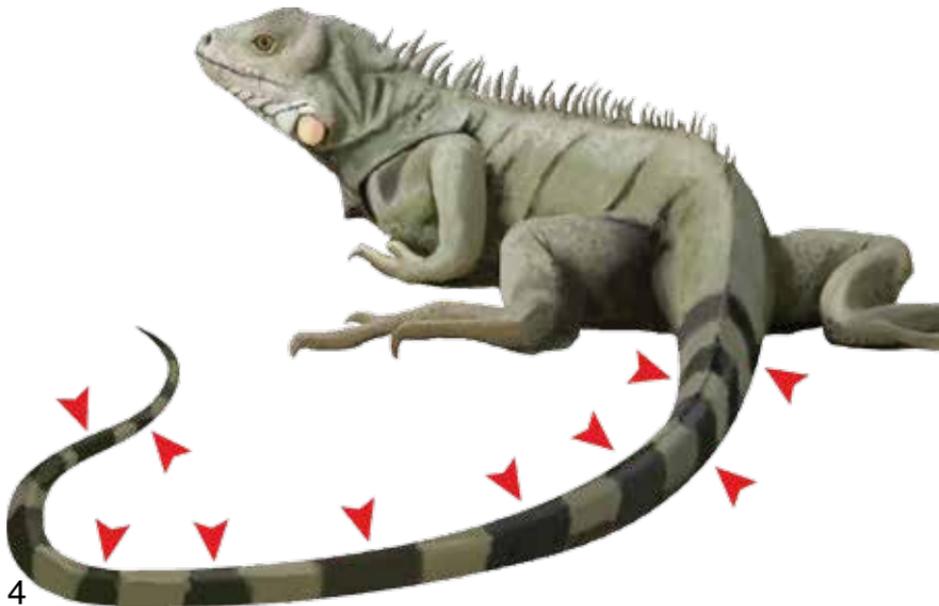
The local authorities will tell you how.



You've looked at the head, now look at the tail.

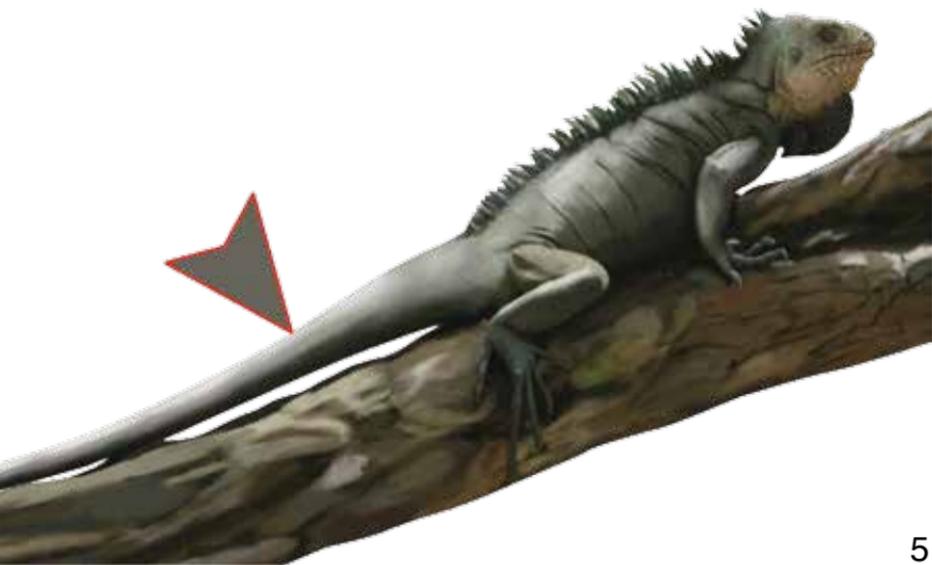
The differences are clear there as well.

Greens' tails have stripes all the way.



Statia's Iguanas are a good solid gray.

**“Who needs a striped tail, as gaudy as can be?
A solid dark color is good enough for me.”**



Information about Statia's Iguana

The Lesser Antillean Iguana (*Iguana delicatissima*) is a magnificent species, that deserves our protection for all generations to see. The name “Iguana” is derived from “Iwana”, a Spanish form of the Taino name for lizard. “Delicatissima” means extraordinary in Latin; a fitting name for our extraordinary Iguana.

Our Statia Iguana looks very similar to its cousin, the common Green Iguana, *Iguana iguana*. Unfortunately, Greens have been introduced to our island and now threaten the very existence of ours.

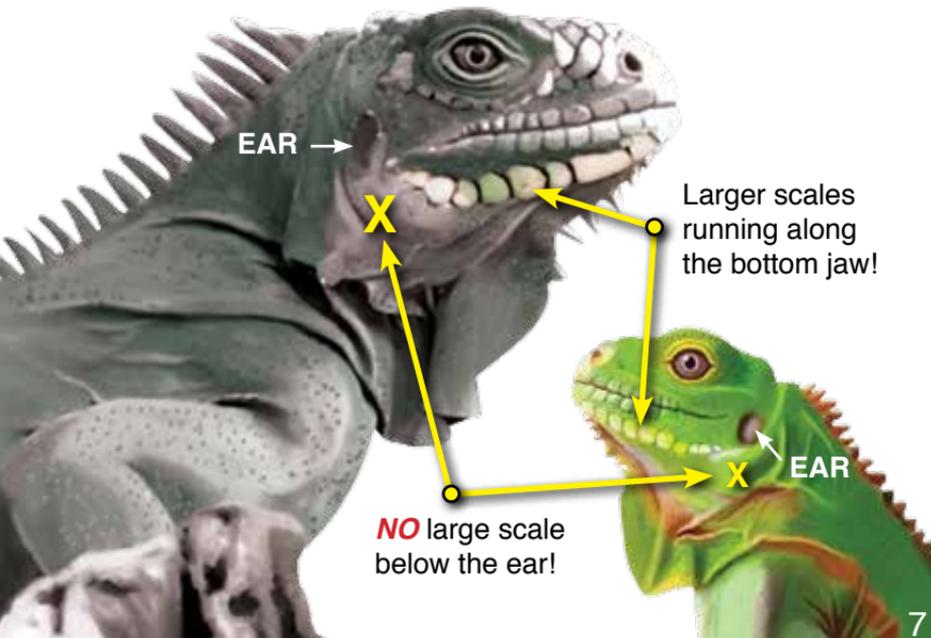
Being closely related, Greens can mate with our Iguana, producing **hybrids, which are a cross-breed of both iguanas**. This will make Statia's Iguana go **extinct**.

Though both iguanas have similar body shapes, ours have shorter faces **without the Green's distinctive large round scale below the ear and its striped or banded tail**.

Unlike the Greens, ours has a line of larger pale-colored scales running along their bottom jaw and **no** striped or banded tail.

**Lesser Antillean Iguana (*Iguana delicatissima*),
adult and juvenile**

Coloration: Juveniles are bright green that transitions to a dark color as they age! **NO striped or banded tail!**



Information about the Invasive Green Iguana

The common Green Iguana (*Iguana iguana*) is a native of Central and South America. Green iguanas can migrate to our islands naturally across the water by clinging to floating debris caused by storms. Greens can also be introduced by humans as escaped pets, released pets, or by accidental introduction in shipping containers.

Green iguanas are well adapted survivors, breeding in large numbers even when displaced to new environments, thus becoming an invasive species. They are larger and more opportunistic feeders, resulting in the decline of plants and other resources that our iguanas rely on for their existence. However, the most devastating issue is that Green Iguanas are able to mate with our Iguana resulting in hybridization. When this occurs, hundreds, then thousands of hybrids are produced that will quickly result in the extinction of Statia's Iguana.

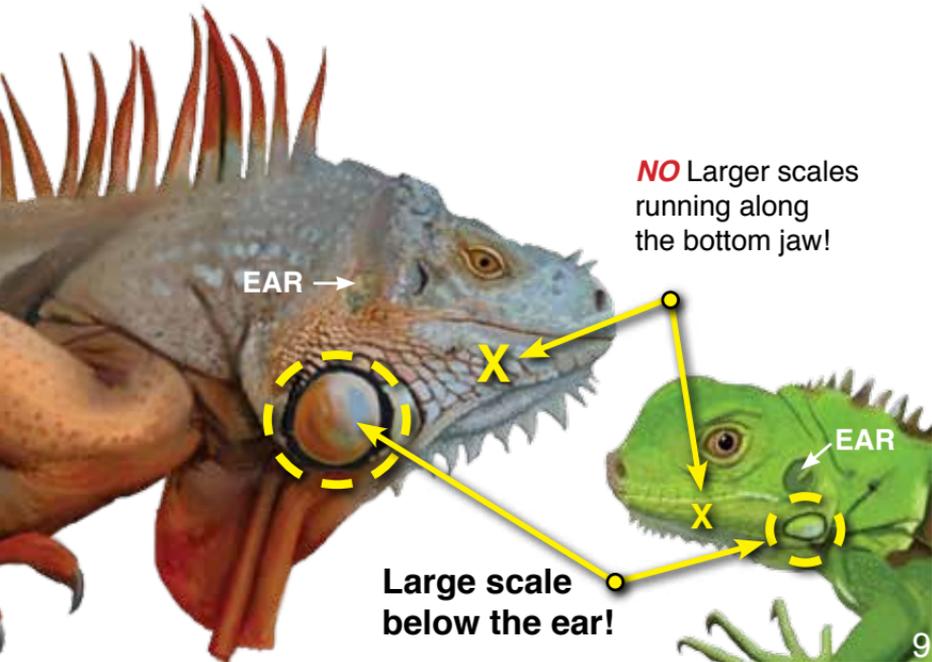
Greens have their place in the Americas, but they do not belong on St. Eustatius or anywhere else in Lesser Antilles.

Now you know who should stay and who should go.

See a Green Iguana? Report what you know.

**Common Green Iguana (*Iguana iguana*),
adult and juvenile**

Coloration: Juveniles are bright green that transitions to a darker green and orange as they age! **WITH striped or banded tail!**



Save Statia's Iguana

Why is it important to save Statia's iguana? The Lesser Antillean Iguana has lived on Statia for thousands of years, even before humans came to the island. Sadly, it is now endangered and at risk of extinction unless we work together to help protect them. Iguanas are harmless to humans and usually flee when approached. However, you might be lucky enough to have one in your yard. If so, keep an eye out for nests, eggshells or hatchlings. If you are able to confirm a nest, please contact STENAPA to report this. Statia is one of the last remaining islands that is home to the Lesser Antillean Iguana, and this is something to be proud of. Future generations will thank us for taking care of this beautiful species so that they and their children can enjoy them.

The Lesser Antillean Iguana is threatened by free-roaming cats and dogs. Please consider carefully before getting a pet, and if possible keep them indoors or fenced. Traffic is also a problem for the iguana, so please drive carefully and try to avoid hitting them. If you do find a dead or injured iguana (especially one with colored beads behind the neck), please report the location immediately to STENAPA. Bead colors should be read from the outside in.

St. Eustatius National Parks

You can help. Report iguana sightings to STENAPA
especially if the iguana has a striped or banded tail !!

Try to take a photo. Note the location, date and time of day, then immediately call one of the numbers below to confirm whether it is a native or invasive iguana, and we will assist with catching and/or relocating animal.

STENAPA office hours (7am - 5pm Monday to Friday)

Call: + 599 318 2884

Or send an email to manager@statiapark.org. Don't forget to attach your photo of the iguana.

Outside office hours or in emergencies call

+599 318 5720 or contact **EcoPro +599 318 4542**

Statia's Iguana is protected by law and may not be harmed.

Visit our website



www.statiapark.org



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Save Statia's Iguana

St. Eustatius National Parks (STENAPA), Carribean, Netherlands: This booklet was created to spotlight and bring awareness to Statia's magnificent *Iguana delicatissima*'s struggle for survival in a constantly changing world, by highlighting a new threat that may lead to the species' extinction in our lifetime.

The greatest threat the species faces is the invasive Common Green Iguana whose presence brings the real possibility that *Iguana delicatissima* will go extinct.

How can this be? This is because the Green Iguana has become invasive in *Iguana delicatissima*'s natural environment and is capable of mating with *Iguana delicatissima*, resulting in hybridization (cross-breeding). Due to the lifespans of both iguanas, which range from 15 to 25 years, hybridization will quickly affect an entire population. Thus, *Iguana delicatissima* will cease to exist - **extinction!**

The contents of this booklet describe the differences between the two iguanas in order to enhance local assistance identifying the invasive iguanas to help eliminate this threat. This is a simple non-technical booklet intended for all ages.



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