



Viewing Green Iguanas in a safe habitat out West



Protecting the iguanas in the west through The Green Iguana Conservation Project

A project to protect endangered wildlife in their natural habitat was re-opened under the new normal at the San Ignacio Resort Hotel on Friday. The Green Iguana Conservation Project, which was founded in 1996, continues to provide great joy to nature lovers.

Under the shade of moist and rich flora, we were able to directly observe on Friday, twenty adults, twenty-six juveniles and twenty-eight 'baby' iguanas all resting in their special wooden enclosures.

To guide us through the iguana compartments was Luis Rosales, Project Manager of the Green Iguana

Conservation Project. The iguanas we met were mostly docile and would close their eyes when their backs were rubbed. There was one individual resting in the far corner, its powerful tail fully extended, which Rosales described as fully in charge of the 'house.' These cold-blooded creatures become active as their environmental temperature increases. They are very adept at movement in the tree canopy and can fall from great heights with little or no resulting injury.

The iguana hatchery at the San Ignacio Resort Hotel was designed to increase the survivability of the young ones. When fully mature, the green iguanas are released into the wild. The idea of the Green Iguana Conservation Project was sparked by Marian Roberson, co-owner of the San Ignacio Resort Hotel. In 2003, it was decided to open the project to the public with a main objective of educating children.

Paulita Bedran-Figueroa told us that for the life span of the project, many children have been able to visit the Hotel to learn more about the green iguanas.

In an effort to keep feeding the iguanas and for further expansion plans, the San Ignacio Resort Hotel is relying on a \$10.00 fee for adults and \$5.00 for children for the iguana tour. Interactions with the iguanas can be made on Friday, Saturday and Sunday at 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

These remnants of the dinosaur era have been able to master their habitat, thriving in Western Belize. But their existence remains threatened for loss of their natural habitat and as a source of protein.