

Iguana Tales

**A free
3-minute
presentation**





Spend any time on SXM and you are bound to see iguanas, specifically a type of iguana known as the Green Iguana, which is bright green when it is young.



As they get older, they tend to get less green...



...often becoming various shades of gray...



...from almost white...



...to almost black.



Males also get orange during the breeding season, which here can happen all year round.



Green iguanas are often found in wetland areas and are very comfortable in the water...



...and are in fact, more graceful as swimmers than walking or running.



A long time ago, there was a different iguana on SXM, the Lesser Antillean Iguana, a species native to the Caribbean that is now endangered.



In 1888, the mongoose was introduced to kill rats and it ended up killing off the native iguana instead, perhaps over the course of several decades. For most of the 20th century, the island had very few iguanas or none at all.



In the mid-1990s, the Green Iguana was introduced here. Legend has it that a crate of iguanas arrived at the airport, was not picked up and after some time a sympathetic employee released them in Flamingo Pond.



Once upon a time, Flamingo Pond looked like this, but...



...around 2000 it was filled in during an expansion of the airport. At this time, iguanas were brought from Flamingo Pond to other parts of the island.



Over the last two decades, their population has increased dramatically, particularly in SXM's wetlands.



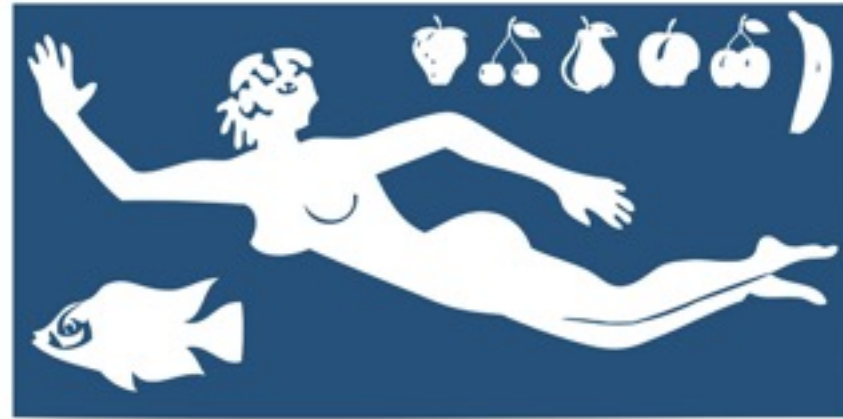
They are a potential threat to birds. Although they are primarily vegetarian, they eat bird eggs on occasion and disturb nests.



They may also be at least partially responsible for alarming declines in some mangrove areas where they are common.



While we may enjoy seeing these iguanas, it is important to remember that they are an invasive species that may be threatening our native animals and ecosystems.



**LES FRUITS
DE MER**