



IGUANA (*Ctenosaura similis*)



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Iguana Impacts To Property Owners

The large lizards pose a direct economic nuisance to island residents by:

- **Damaging costly landscaping plants**
- **Invading the attics of homes where they cause disturbances**
- **Excrement may damage ceilings, produce foul odors in the subtropical climate, and be a potential breeding ground for pathogens.**



However, it is their potential impacts in other arenas that are cause for greater concern.



Impacts On Rare Species

The diet of black spiny-tailed iguanas, while largely herbivorous, is also known to include rodents, eggs, nestling birds, and hatchling sea turtles (Krysko et al. 2003). There are a variety of state and federally listed species on Gasparilla Island which are vulnerable to depredation from the dense population of iguanas.

- Least terns (*Sterna antillarum*)
- Wilson's plovers (*Charadius wilsonia*)
- Snowy plovers (*C. alexandrinus*)
- Loggerhead sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*)



Black spiny-tailed iguanas also use gopher tortoise burrows (*Gopherus polyphemus*), and the two species have not been observed to cohabit the burrows (McKercher 2001).

All are among the species of concern that potentially could be impacted by the large numbers of iguanas.

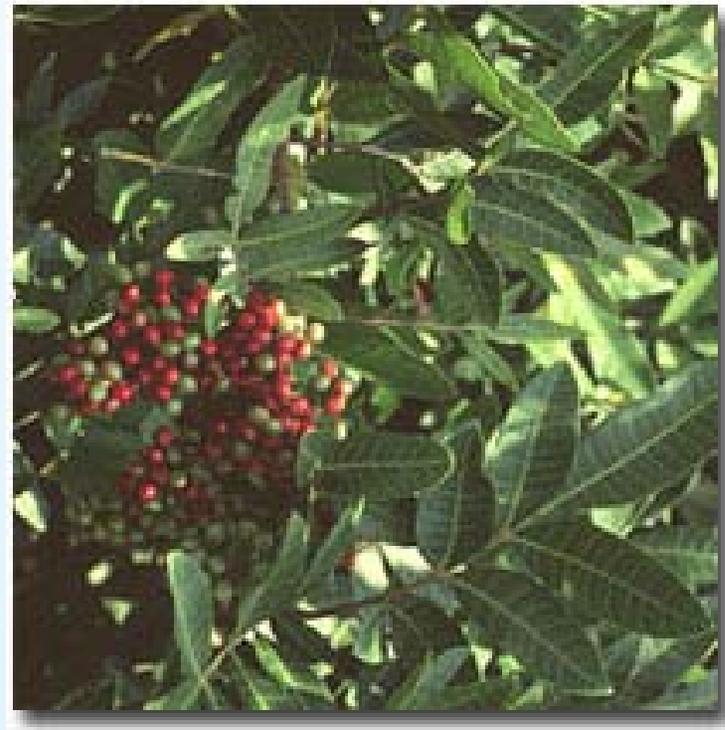


Spread Of Invasive Plants

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection lists the Brazilian pepper (*Shinus terebinthifolius*) as the invasive plant species with the greatest destructive potential in Gasparilla Island State Park (FDEP 2002).

Recently, iguanas have been shown to have a mutualistic association with the Brazilian pepper whereby populations of both species are enhanced by iguana foraging on Brazilian pepper (Jackson and Jackson 2007).

Invasive plant control is time consuming and costly, and the iguana serves to increase the problem and potential remediation costs.





Damage From Burrowing

- **Animal burrows in general can pose serious hazards for hydrologic structures (Hegdal and Harbour 1991).**
- **Black spiny-tailed iguanas create extensive burrows like the related green iguana (*Iguana iguana*).**
- **Green iguana burrows have been identified as a concern for hydrologic structures such as levees and seawalls (e.g., Sementelli et al. accepted).**



Iguana burrows are common along seawalls on Gasparilla Island and their undermining may facilitate breaches during severe storms, especially hurricanes.





Where Are We Now

Charlotte County uses various control methods for the management of the Black spiny-tailed iguanas on Gasparilla Island only.

- **Utilizing MSBU/MSTU's requested by taxpayers since 2008 on Gasparilla Island**
- **Contracted United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection (APHIS) Wildlife Services (WS)**
- **Created a county wide tracking system for monitoring the species, but no management at this time.**

Neighboring Counties

- **Sarasota County does management for the invasive species on public lands, but only since end of 2009.**
- **Lee County does management on Gasparilla Island through MSBU/MSTU's requested by taxpayers since the middle of 2007.**

