

Giant invasive iguana (GII)

Iguana iguana



KEY FEATURES



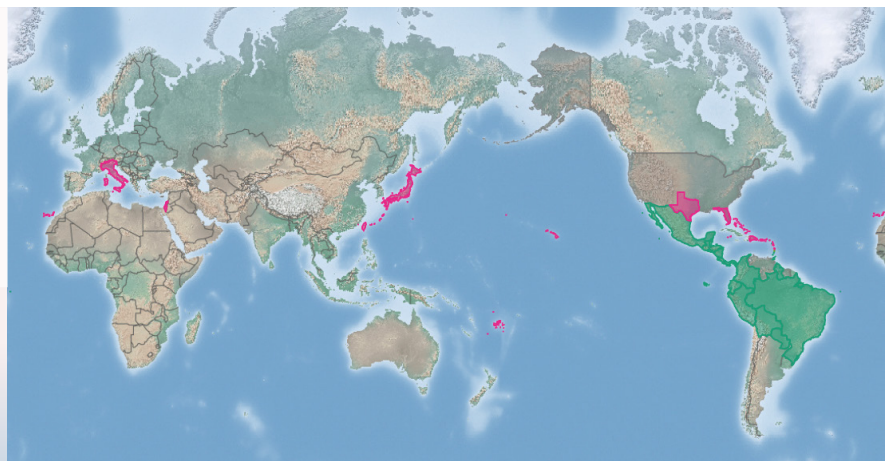
- Giant invasive iguana (GII) is a large lizard that can reach 2 m in length and weigh over 5 kg, but is typically 0.4–2.15 kg. The tail is 2.5–3 times the length of the body. Toes are long, with long curved claws for climbing. There is a large dewlap (fold) of skin, with spines along its edge, under the chin, and a row of flexible spines running from the neck down the back and onto the first part of the tail
- Most are mainly green in colour. However, some can be have black, grey, white, bluish, green or brown. Colour can be overlaid with patterns: darker spots, blotches or bands. Dark bands on the tail are common.
- Males are larger than females and have larger dewlaps and jowls. Young are typically a vivid green colour either with or without darker streaks or marbled bands, and with smaller spines
- Giant invasive iguana can reach very high densities for such a large lizard, laying clutches of 14–77 eggs
- Can use a range of tropical and sub-tropical, dry and semi-dry habitats, including urban areas
- Eat a wide variety of plant foods
- Adult females can travel up to 3 km between nesting areas and their normal home range
- An excellent swimmer in fresh and saltwater, it can remain submerged for over 4 hours and has likely colonized neighbouring islands by swimming
- Most successful in human-modified habitats.



PATHWAYS

- Introduced
- Native
- Origin not recorded

- Shipping
- Pet trade
- Swimming (local)



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IMPACTS



Environment

Most impacts are on other iguana species. Can also carry wildlife diseases and ticks that can harm other reptiles. Eat and destroy native plants. Can disperse seeds of invasive plants.



Health

Can transmit *Salmonella* (a bacterium that causes food poisoning). Large lizards can cause severe bites and painful blows with their whip-like tails.



Society and Culture

None reported.



Economy

Destroy cultivated plants. Can cause erosion and road collapse by burrowing.

DISTRIBUTION

Native range

From Mexico south to Paraguay and south-eastern Brazil. Numerous islands, including Cozumel, San Andrés and Providencia, Roatán, Utila, Cayo Icacos, Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Montserrat and Saba.

Introduced range

United States (Florida, Hawai'i (Oahu and Maui) and Texas), Japan (Ishigaki Island), Fiji (Qamea, Matagi, Laucala, Taveuni and Koro Islands), the Canary Islands, Israel, and many islands in the West Indies.

SOURCES

Images: © Elizabeth A. Rosnik via CABI

Text, images and map: *Iguana iguana* (iguana) – CABI <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/28477>



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