

NATIONAL

Protecting the Rainbow Boa

THE Islands' endangered Rainbow Boa snake will be studied for the first time this week by a team of visiting experts.

Members of Conservation and Research for Endangered Species (CRES) are returning to Ambergris Cay on an eight-day conservation mission.

One of their main aims is to preserve the native Caribbean snake.

Dr Glenn Gerber of the San Diego Zoo in California will be joined by a team of endangered species research experts including research assistant R Graham Reynolds of the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Tennessee.

Mr Reynolds said: "We must all work to protect these incredible creatures so that future generations of visitors and residents of the TCI may enjoy the beauty that is unique to the islands."

Ambergris Cay, the private island residence of Turks and Caicos Sporting Club, is home to a significant population of the endangered Rainbow Boa, subspecies of the Southern Bahamas Boa.

In partnership with Ambergris Cay naturalists, Dr Gerber and his team will document the presence of the reptile species on island and produce rough density estimates, as well as initiate a study and conservation plan for the boas.

The snakes will be captured and the team will work to gather all relevant physical data including size, weight, sex, reproductive condition and overall health.

DNA will either be extracted from blood samples drawn from



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the snakes or through clipping off scales to determine the genetic diversity of the population.

The boas will then be tagged with an internal microchip and released exactly where they were captured on island.

Ambergris Cay has already set initiatives to curb the degeneration of these endangered species.

Through membership guidelines preventing pets on island, as well as the sole use of motorized golf carts for transportation, the island is doing everything in its power to keep these unique species of animals preserved.

After their time spent studying the Rainbow Boas, the team will spend a week at sea monitoring small islands with populations of the rock iguana.

Islands intended for monitoring include Bush Cay, Six Hills Cay and French Cay, all of which were chosen Turks and Caicos cays for recent, successful past iguana translocation projects.

Last March Dr Gerber and his team of endangered species research experts visited Ambergris Cay to capture populations of the native Turks Island Rock Iguana (*Cyclura carinata*).

The team worked to translocate a portion of the iguana population to Bush Cay, a small island just south of Ambergris Cay.

A spokesperson for the Turks and Caicos Sporting Club said they were "honoured" to welcome back Dr Gerber.

"We are excited they are continuing their collaborative work with the CRES in mutually beneficial efforts to conserve these unique and historically significant animals and reptiles."

The San Diego Zoo will monitor the population of Rainbow Boas for a period of three to four years, working at the same time to initiate an educational partnership with the Turks and Caicos National Trust, as well as Ambergris Cay staff and members.



John Hartley is a retired CEO. He was educated in economics and econometrics at Manchester University and Harvard Business School. He is an occasional contributor at invitational economics seminars at Brazenose College, Oxford.

Economics Column

A Good Beginning from HE BOMBSHELL FROM THE FED

STRAIGHT away we see the beneficial impact of competent and honest administration.

Clearly and rightly the first measures of Governor Wetherell and the Crown are designed to restore the rule of law as an administrative fact and the confidence in administrative justice and competence that effective government requires.

The Governor has made a good start in economic management by electing to tell the truth in plain English.

We who live here know the true state of the economy. He has now come out and said it: the state of the economy is "dire".

It has been part of our tragedy to watch as decline grips the economy whilst listening to babblings about economic stabilisation plans from an administration that could not, or would not, publish accurate and up to date statistics about the country, its population and its economy.

It is difficult to advise on the TCI economy, except in the most general terms. There has been no published data for close to two years.

The recently published audit reports suggest very strongly that the Government itself had no idea what was going on.

To what extent that state of ignorance was encouraged so as to confuse observers will have to be determined by the appropriate authorities.

This lack of data presents the Governor and his newly arrived team with difficult but tractable problems.

In the absence of good data it would be very easy to do the wrong thing in haste.

Therefore no big decisions, or decisions which are hard to reverse, should be taken until the data on the economy and for the Government accounts are collected, collated and published.

Apart from concentrating on protection of the poor, the disadvantaged and the frail, elderly or sick, very little should

be done in the initial stage.

The approach should be to get a grip of cash management immediately and to stop all outflows that are obviously part of the old pals act.

Foreign payments need to be scrutinised with very great care. They reduce the amount of cash the Government has available to help maintain domestic demand and thereby employment.

Once the money is paid away, it will be much harder to recover payments made on wrongful contracts.

The Government need not be concerned about defaulting on payments to doubtful creditors for such things as private jets. Creditors in good standing will show up to prove the debt.

If there are payments being made on contracts that have been corruptly obtained, then the cash is not payable and no doubt such matters will end up in the courts.

Getting control of financial management and fiscal discipline, highlighted by the Governor, is simply a long hard grind.

The sooner it can be done the better and then the Governor, his advisory council, TCI businessmen and the wider community will be able to turn their attention to the longer term measures needed to restore the economy of the Islands.

Finally, many will have seen Wednesday's bombshell from the Federal Reserve.

The drastic action, committing huge sums (about 130 of our Arkansas units) to buying treasury stock and mortgage paper, is designed to drive US interest rates to zero for an extended period.

Knowledgeable commentators say that the Fed is influenced by dire indicators for the US economy and the success of similar action by the Bank of England which averted catastrophe in the UK.

This action by the Fed may completely change the nature of action required here and must be carefully analysed now for its likely impact later this year.



Ask Stan

THE INSURANCE MAN

Stan,

Is there a special type of policy I can get to insure my expensive jewellery and camera?

New Homeowner, Leeward

Dear New Homeowner,

Yes, there is. All Risks Insurance is what I recommend.

This type of cover can be taken out as an extension to your Household Contents policy and is designed to cover accidental loss or damage to specified items like jewellery or photographic equipment whether inside the home, conducting your normal day to day affairs outside, or

travelling.

The cost for this insurance is higher than basic Contents cover, due to the wider level of protection.

Each item is individually listed and insured for a stated sum so you will need proof of the item's value through either a receipt or recent valuation.

I would strongly recommend that you consider buying this policy extension to protect your valuable

items, particularly if they are to be taken out of your home.

Stanford Charlton is the Country Manager of Fidelity Insurance (Cayman) Limited, Turks and Caicos operations.

He is an Associate of The Chartered Insurance Institute of London, England and is a Chartered Insurance Broker.

You can send any questions or comments you have to Stan at info@fidelityturks.com