



CABRITOS ISLAND



ISLAND CONSERVATION

Preventing Extinctions

CABRITOS ISLAND, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

PROTECTING A CARIBBEAN WONDERLAND

Island Conservation's mission is to prevent extinctions by removing invasive species from islands.

Island Conservation and SOH Conservation are supporting the Dominican Republic's Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources' international effort to restore Cabritos Island by removing invasive alien species (IAS) from the island.

WHY CABRITOS ISLAND?



IGUANAS

Cabritos Island is home to the **Critically Endangered Ricord's Iguana** and the **Vulnerable Rhinoceros Iguana**. These are the only two rock iguana species with overlapping ranges and both species are declining due to invasive species and loss of habitat.



RECOGNIZED

Cabritos Island is part of the **Lake Enriquillo and Cabritos Island National Park**, the **Jaragua-Bahoruco-Enriquillo UNESCO Biosphere Reserve**, and the **Massif de la Selle Conservation Corridor**, and is a designated Ramsar site and Important Bird Area.



UNIQUE

Cabritos Island is located in **Lake Enriquillo, the largest lake and lowest elevation point the Caribbean**. The lake is in a valley between high mountain ranges that was formed when two ancient islands collided. In fact, Cabritos Island is entirely below sea level!



OPPORTUNITY

The Ricord's Iguana survives as three subpopulations, with two in the southwestern Dominican Republic and one in Haiti. Once restored, **Cabritos Island will be the only part of the lizard's range free from the threat of damaging feral cats and invasive burros.**



BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS AND CAPACITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE



ISLAND CONSERVATION

Island Conservation (IC) brings our IAS eradication planning and implementing expertise to support project partners and locally based field teams.



GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

The government of the Dominican Republic is committed to protecting species on islands by removing the IAS that are threatening them.



LOCAL CAPACITY

This project has provided training and new conservation jobs for residents of the Dominican Republic. The locally-based field teams have gained extensive experience in IAS removal techniques, building important conservation capacity for future projects in the region.

¹ Invasive alien species are non-native plants and animals, introduced by humans that negatively impact the natural environment or human livelihoods.

HOW WE ARE WORKING TO RESTORE CABRITOS ISLAND

CABRITOS ISLAND RESTORATION PROJECT: Island Conservation is working with government and non-government partners to remove IAS from Cabritos Island.



VISION & MISSION: We envision Cabritos Island's native wildlife, particularly the iguanas, growing and thriving. To accomplish this, our project mission is to provide safe breeding habitat for threatened species on Cabritos Island by removing invasive species.

THE PROBLEM: Invasive species directly prey on native reptiles, compete with them for food, destroy their nests, and damage critical habitat.

THE SOLUTION: The removal of invasive species from Cabritos Island will safeguard and protect the native iguana populations and create the opportunity for their habitat to recover.

THE PARTNERSHIP: Since 2010, the Dominican Republic's Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources has led an effort to eradicate IAS from Cabritos Island. Island Conservation and SOH Conservation joined the project in 2013. Since then, the partners have worked to complete this project, and are now closer than ever to eradicating feral cats and donkeys.

“The restoration of Isla Cabritos... an ideal model for effective conservation projects in the Caribbean...delivers great conservation results that will bring significant benefits to the endemic and native species for years to come.”

Ing. Jose M. Mateo, Director of Biodiversity,
Ministry of Environmental and Natural Resources
in the Dominican Republic



Above: On April 9, 2015, Island Conservation and the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of the Dominican Republic signed a Memorandum of Understanding to support island restoration through the removal of invasive species in the Dominican Republic, including working together to restore Cabritos Island.



Left: *Consolea* cactus, a native cactus flower on Cabritos Island.

WE ADD VALUE TO THE CABRITOS ISLAND RESTORATION PROJECT BY...

TRAINING locally-based field teams on the methods, strategies, ethics, and skills necessary to live and work on an uninhabited island while completing an eradication project.

PRIORITIZING saving at-risk species with the greatest chance of recovery through our mission to prevent extinctions by removing invasive species from islands. We are the only global organization focused solely on this objective.

LEADING a crowdsourced fundraising campaign to secure resources and build awareness for the Cabritos Island Restoration Project. Learn more at www.islandconservation.org/cabritos-island.

Turning the Tide



Critically Endangered Ricord's Iguana

CABRITOS ISLAND

Challenge Feral cats and burros are having an ecosystem wide impact on Cabritos Island and are threatening several species, including the Critically Endangered Ricord's Iguana and the Vulnerable Rhinoceros Iguana.

Solution Removal of feral cats and burros will protect these imperiled lizards and will make Cabritos Island the only part of Ricord's Iguanas' range that is safe from the threat of damaging, invasive predators.

Partnership The Dominican Republic's Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, with support from Island Conservation and SOH Conservation, is leading an international effort to restore Cabritos Island by removing invasive species. Complete removal of invasive species is necessary to protect native iguanas and to restore and maintain biodiversity on Cabritos Island.



A local field team is conducting restoration work on Cabritos Island

CAPACITY BUILDING

Challenge Projects to eradicate IAS from islands are complex, and require specialized approaches to methods and strategies. Additional capacity was needed within the Dominican Republic in order to implement the project to completion.

Solution We are training a group of Dominican Republic residents in eradication methods and principles. Through training, the team has developed extensive knowledge and gained experience in invasive species removal techniques, building capacity for future projects in the region.

Partnership We work with project partners to identify the trainees, some of whom have previous experience working on the partners' projects. Our partner, SOH Conservation, employs the field team members throughout the course of this project.



The ATV successfully reassembled on the island

LOGISTICS

Challenge Cabritos Island is approximately seven miles (11.3 km) long and one mile (1.6 km) wide, and the field camp is near the western end. The team had to walk many miles each day, or utilize a boat which is difficult when lake conditions are rough. We needed a more efficient way to get around.

Solution Buy a large all-terrain vehicle (ATV) and transport it to Cabritos Island, a challenge in itself.

Partnership Resources were limited, so it was only by working together that we could transport the ATV to Cabritos Island. The partners worked together to coordinate a mechanic to disassemble the ATV and a team of workers to lift the heavy pieces into a small boat. Then, everything had to be unloaded and reassembled on the island.

CONSERVATION IN ACTION

2010 CABRITOS ISLAND FEASIBILITY STUDY

Island Conservation worked with project partners to assess the feasibility of eradicating IAS from Cabritos Island.

2012 BURROS RELOCATED

The Dominican Republic's Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources removed 99 burros from the island and donated them to members of the local communities bordering Lake Enriquillo.

2013 LOCAL FIELD TEAM

Island Conservation staff spent six weeks in the Dominican Republic developing operational strategies and training the locally-based field team in eradication practices.

2015 EVENING THE ODDS

The field team worked from 2013-2014. In March 2015, the team returned with new techniques needed to detect and remove the last few remaining invasive species. Significant progress has been made.

TO GET INVOLVED, CONTACT:

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The team arriving on Cabritos Island.



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Cover photo: A Vulnerable Rhinoceros Iguana on Cabritos Island with the Dominican Republic flag.