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Impact evaluation of the alien species *Iguana iguana* (Squamata: Iguanidae) in the forest restoration of a wetland

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The *Iguana iguana* species, natural of Central and South America, was introduced in Puerto Rico probably through the pets' trade and nowadays presents a big population established in some areas of this country. As this species don't have many natural predators, the populations aim to grow up in an unbounded way, increasing the impacts of the introduction on the landscapes and native species populations. This work had the objective to evaluate the impact of the alien species *Iguana iguana* on the demography and growing of the vegetal species selected to execute a forest restoration process on a wetland. The research was realized through the months of March and April of 2008, in an area sizing about 40,000 m², donated to the Universidad Metropolitana (UMET), where was being done a reforestation process, using wetland and mangrove vegetal species. This study was composed by two parts: population density evaluation of *I. iguana* in this area, applying the point sampling method; and behavioral observations of this species in the reforestation areas, sorting a central observation point in each area, applying the animal focal method to the behavior observation. To execute these observations were used 10X50 binoculars and a stopwatch. The observation period adds up six days to determine the population density (totalizing 9 observation hours) and four days to describe

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animals' behavior on the reforestation areas (totalizing 32 observation hours). The comparison of the obtained results with bibliography data shows a very high population density of the *I. iguana* species in the research area (around 300 animals/ha). The observed behaviors in the reforestation areas were in the big majority of basking, followed by foraging, locomotion and displaying behaviors. The vegetal species consumed during the foraging behavior were not the same used in the reforestation process. This data indicates that the presence of this population was not presenting a negative impact on the reforestation process that was being executed in the research area. Nevertheless, is recommended a constant monitoring of this population through the other epochs of the year.