

Deletion of Orange-throated Whiptail Lizard *Cnemidophorus hyperythrus* from Appendix II. Proponent: United States of America.

Summary: The Orange-throated Whiptail Lizard is restricted to south-west California, USA and Baja California and nearby islands, Mexico where its status ranges from rare to abundant. Included in Appendix II in 1975, CITES Annual Report data indicate negligible levels of international trade in the species, with a total of 156 specimens being imported by Japan, Hong Kong SAR and the USA during the period 1975-2000. There are no records of illegal trade in the species and commercial harvesting is prohibited in both range States. The species is now proposed for deletion from Appendix II. This proposal results from the Periodic Review of Animal Taxa in the Appendices and has been endorsed by the Animals Committee at their 18th meeting (April 2002).

Analysis: Following the precautionary measures of Resolution Conf. 9.24, Annex 4, B4), previous low levels of international trade, the extremely low potential demand for this species in international trade and the prohibition on legal harvesting of the species for commercial purposes in both range States, indicate that the criteria for inclusion in Appendix II are not met. The species is not closely related to, nor does it resemble, any other species in the Appendices, so it does not qualify for retention in Appendix II for reasons of similar appearance.

With no population estimates and little other biological data available, it is unclear whether the population would be considered small or as having a restricted area of distribution. However, populations in part of the range are considered abundant and stable, and the potential distribution of the species in Mexico suggests it is unlikely that the species would meet the biological criteria for inclusion in Appendix I.

Supporting Statement (SS)	Additional information
Mexico and USA	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Range</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>IUCN Global Category</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>DD (Baillie and Groombridge, 1996)</i></p>

Biological and trade criteria for retention in Appendix II

A) Trade regulation needed to prevent future inclusion in Appendix I

The status of most *C. hyperythrus* populations in California is unknown. However, *C. h. beldingi* in San Diego County was described in 1980 as being "seriously depleted". By 1994, an estimated 75% of its former habitat had been destroyed through development activities.

In Mexico, some populations are listed as 'rare' and others as 'threatened'. Status surveys have been undertaken for three years on the islands of Carmen, Coronados and Monserrate where the species is considered to be abundant and the populations stable. Population data for the other islands and the Baja California Peninsula are not available. An informal report suggests that the species is "extremely abundant" in Baja California.

Based on habitat preference, an estimated area of 80 000 km² is available or may be inhabited by *C. hyperythrus* in Mexico. Domestic and international trade are not considered threats to the species in Mexico or the USA. CITES Annual Report data show that 156 specimens were imported and 132 specimens exported between 1980 and 1997; the import of 156 live

Specimens reported in CITES Annual Reports were all of wild origin. Although documentation for the transactions cannot be verified, it is highly likely that these actually involved other species of Cnemidophorus, which is relatively widely traded at the genus level (TRAFFIC North America, 2002). US Fish and Wildlife Service trade data for 1995 and 1998-2001 show no records of C. hyperythrus in trade. A well established reptile dealer has not observed the species in trade in 25 years and is not aware of any demand (Barnes, 2002). According to Toloski (2002), collection of C. hyperythrus has been minimal.

According to Parra and Mellink, there is no indication of trade in C. hyperythrus (known as Huico Garganta Anaranjada) or any other whiptail lizard in North Mexico. There is also no known traditional use of the species in the region (Parra, 2002).

Supporting Statement (SS)	Additional information
<p>specimens by the USA from Mexico, the export of 25 live specimens by the USA to Japan in 1996, the export of 11 scientific specimens by Mexico to the USA in 1996, and the export of 96 live specimens from the USA to Hong Kong SAR in 1997.</p> <p>Collection of <i>C. hyperythrus</i> for commercial trade is prohibited in California and Mexico; there are no existing or anticipated planned harvests of this species. No reports of legal trade are documented for either Mexico or the USA.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>B) Harvesting for international trade has, or may have, detrimental impact on population (i) exceeds sustainable yield; (ii) reduces population to potentially threatened level</u></p> <p>Between 1980 and 1997, a maximum of 156 specimens were reported in international trade. Harvest for commercial purposes is prohibited throughout its range.</p>	
<p>Retention in Appendix II to improve control of other listed species</p> <p><u>Specimens resemble other species and are difficult to distinguish, or most of taxon is already listed</u></p>	
	<p><i>No other species of the genus Cnemidophorus are listed in the Appendices.</i></p>

Other information

Threats

Neither domestic nor international trade threaten the species in Mexico or the USA. However habitat destruction has affected populations in both the USA and Mexico and is the primary threat to *C. h. beldingi* in Southern California.

Toloski (2002) agrees that habitat loss is the greatest threat to the species in southern California. C. h. beldingi is a habitat specialist that copes poorly with habitat disturbance and drought years (Anon., 2002).

Mexican populations inhabiting the islands in the Gulf of California and the Pacific Ocean are threatened by exotic species, primarily predators.

Conservation, management and legislation

No specific population monitoring programs exist for the species in the USA. Population surveys have been undertaken on three Mexican islands, for three years. Many of the Mexican island populations occur within protected nature reserves.

The list of threatened Mexican species (NORMA Oficial Mexicana NOM-059-ECOL-2001) of March 2002 states that C. h. schmidti is designated as under 'special protection.'

The collection/harvest of the species for commercial trade is prohibited in California and Mexico. Exports from the USA would require a declaration form to establish legal collection and Mexican populations of *C. hyperythrus* listed as 'rare' would require a permit for their collection and export.

It is the subspecies C. h. beldingi which is listed as a California Species of Special Concern (Anon., 2002).

C. hyperythrus is designated as a California Species of Concern (CSC). Collection or possession of the species is therefore controlled by permits and these are issued for scientific purposes only.

Similar Species

Supporting Statement (SS)	Additional information
The species could be confused with <i>C. labialis</i> or <i>C. tigris</i> .	
<u>Captive Breeding</u>	
No private or commercial breeders are known to have bred this species.	<p><i>Commercial captive propagation of C. hyperythrus is not permitted in California (TRAFFIC North America, 2002).</i></p> <p><i>The species is not commonly kept as a pet (Toloski, 2002). In general Cnemidophorus species are not considered visually attractive as pets (Parra, 2002).</i></p>
<u>Other comments</u>	
Mexico supports the proposal.	

Reviewers: R. Murray, TRAFFIC North America.

References:

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http://www.dfg.ca.gov/hcpb/species/jsp/ssc_result.jsp?specy=reptiles&query=Cnemidophorus%20hyperythrus%20beldingi. Viewed August 2002.
- Anon., 2001. *Cnemidophorus hyperythrus*, Orange-throated whiptail lizard: Periodic review of animal taxa in the Appendices. Preliminary draft prepared by the United States of America and presented at the 17th meeting of the CITES Animals Committee, Hanoi, Vietnam, 30 July–3 August, 2001. AC17 Doc. 8.1 Annex 3.
- Baillie, J. and Groombridge, B. 1996. *The 1996 IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals*. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK.
- Barnes, M., 2002. *in litt.* to TRAFFIC North America, Washington D.C., USA.
- Parra, I., 2002. *in litt.* to TRAFFIC North America, Washington D.C., USA.
- Toloski, B., 2002. *in litt.* to TRAFFIC North America, Washington D.C., USA.
- TRAFFIC North America, 2002. *in litt.* to TRAFFIC International, Cambridge, UK.