

CoP17 Prop. 30. [Tanzania, United Republic of and European Union] Inclusion of Turquoise Dwarf Gecko *Lygodactylus williamsi* in Appendix I

The Turquoise Dwarf Gecko *Lygodactylus williamsi* is endemic to eastern Tanzania, occurring in highly restricted range of four isolated tropical lowland forest patches which are increasingly being degraded. Local officials, villagers and collectors indicate a decrease of the number of geckos in recent years.

There is evidence that the species is illegally collected and traded. It has been offered for sale online in the USA and Europe at moderately high prices. The species has been reported as relatively easy to breed in captivity and specimens offered for sale are often declared to be captive-bred. However, males can lose their striking coloration in captivity, which is likely to result in continuing demand for wild-caught individuals. In Tanzania, although collection and export of Turquoise Dwarf Geckos has never been licensed, the species is still present in trade. Wild-caught specimens are frequently deliberately mislabelled and exported as other *Lygodactylus* species. In 2014, the species was listed on Annex B of the EU Wildlife Trade Regulation (EC) 338/97.

The species meets the criteria for inclusion in Appendix I and this should result in improved regulation of international trade in the species. The adoption of a regulatory mechanism for captive-bred and ranched specimens is essential to complement the listing, given the apparent preference for wild-caught specimens and the potential deliberate mis-declaration to circumvent trade regulations. Tanzania is encouraged to provide protection for the species in its national legislation so as to support effective implementation of this listing.

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