

Inclusion of Masobe Gecko *Paroedura masobe* in Appendix II

Proponents: Madagascar and European Union

Summary: The Masobe Gecko *Paroedura masobe* is one of 15 species of Malagasy Ground Geckos in the genus *Paroedura*. It is endemic to Madagascar with a limited range in low elevation humid forest, typically between 300 and 600m above sea level in the east of the country in the province of Toamasina. In 2011 it was assessed as having an extent of occurrence of no more than 410km², with ca. 100km² of suitable habitat remaining. The species is believed unlikely to occur more widely than its currently known distribution¹. Remaining habitat is fragmented and the population is suspected to be declining, although no quantitative information is available¹. It has been reported that there is a relatively stable population in the Betampona Natural Reserve². Surveys conducted over a period of seven months in the reserve in 2007 and 2010 found just two male specimens. However, in 2013 surveys in an area where the species was known to be present found 23 individuals in three weeks². As well as Betampona Natural Reserve, the species is also known to occur in Zahamena National Park and the newly established protected area of Ambohidray.

Continuing declines in the quality and extent of habitat are believed to be the most important factors affecting the species. Concern has also been expressed about the possible impact of harvest for the international pet trade. The species is highly attractive, and local collectors have indicated that it is one of the most profitable reptile species to collect in the area. There are reports of illegal collection in Betampona Reserve and Zahamena National Park. There is no reported domestic use of the species.

A report (currently in preparation) from two regional administration centers of Analamanga and Antsiranana recorded exports of just under 2500 individuals between 2000 and 2005, before controls on exports were put in place in 2006 (see below). Import data from the USA recorded just under 300 wild-caught individuals imported from Madagascar between 2011 and 2015, most (ca. 250) in 2014 and 2015³. Additional imports of 53 captive-bred individuals from Canada, Germany and the United Arab Emirates were reported between 2011 and 2015. Online surveys between 2011 and 2016 also reveal the presence of the species in the international pet trade with traders in Europe and the USA offering specimens for ca. USD 380-950^{4,5}. There is also evidence of it being kept as a pet in Japan⁶

Since 2006, *P. masobe* has been listed under Category I, Class I of the National Decree 2006-400, which strictly prohibits the hunting, capture, possession and commercial trade of the species except under license for scientific purposes, breeding or exhibitions⁷. It has been reported that there is an annual quota of ten individuals that can be legally exported¹. Trade data above indicate that this figure has been routinely exceeded.

The species is classified in the IUCN Red List as Endangered (2011). The assessment noted that if further research into the distribution of *P. masobe* revealed that it has a true extent of occurrence is less than 100km², it would merit reclassification as Critically Endangered.

Analysis: *Paroedura masobe* has a restricted distribution in an area where habitat is fragmented and declining. It is sought after in the international pet trade with a few hundred specimens having been exported annually in recent years since 2006, exceeding the apparent quota. There is no information on population densities, overall population size or population trends, although the species has reportedly only infrequently been encountered in one of the protected areas within its range in recent years. The species may meet the criteria in Annex 2 aA of Res. Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP16) in that regulation of trade is necessary to avoid it becoming eligible for inclusion in Appendix I in the near future.

Reviewers: S. Chng, J. Janssen and G. Rosa.

References:

Information not referenced in the Summary section is from the Supporting Statement.

¹ Bora, P., Glaw, F., Rabibisoa, N., Ratsoavina, F. Raxworthy, C.J. & Rakotondrazafy, N.A. (2011) *Paroedura masobe*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2011.

² Rosa, G.M. (2016). *In litt.* to the IUCN/TRAFFIC Analyses Team, Cambridge, UK.

³ Analysis of US Fish & Wildlife Service Law Enforcement Management Information System (LEMIS) data, May 2016.

⁴ XE Currency Converter. (2016). *Xe Currency Charts*. <http://www.xe.com/currencycharts>. Viewed on 16th May 2016.

⁵ For example, Facebook (2016) *Paroedura Masobe, hatched 2013*.

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.492960607462809.1073741828.162344533857753&type=3>.

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⁶ Nakadai, A., Kuroki, T., Kato, Y., Suzuki, R., Yamai, S., Yaginuma, C., Shiotani, R., Yamanouch, A. & Hayashidani, H. (2005). Prevalence of *Salmonella* spp. in pet reptiles in Japan. *The Journal of Veterinary Medical Science* 67:97-101.

⁷ Ratsimbazafy, C. *In litt.* to the IUCN/TRAFFIC Analyses Team, Cambridge, UK.