

Inclusion of Earless Monitor Lizard Lanthanotidae in Appendix I

Proponent: Malaysia

Summary: The family Lanthanotidae comprises a single species, the Earless Monitor Lizard *Lanthanotus borneensis*, endemic to the island of Borneo where it is known from Indonesia and Malaysia. It is burrowing, semi-aquatic and nocturnal, being generally recorded from damp soil along river banks. It is oviparous, producing clutches of ca. 2 to 6 eggs^{1, 2, 3}.

There are only a few occurrence records in the wild; many of these have come from incidental encounters posted on social media. Records are from the coastal lowlands of Sarawak, Malaysia, and from northwest Kalimantan, Indonesia in Landak and Sanggau Districts. There is also a single record of the species from East Kalimantan. Its presence has not been confirmed in Brunei Darussalam. It is generally regarded as rare, but is known by local residents, some of whom considered it to be common, at several sites in West Kalimantan⁴. It has been suggested that it may have a wider distribution than generally thought, with its scarcity in scientific collections due to its nocturnal and secretive life habits⁴. However, extensive state-wide herpetofauna surveys are reported to have failed to find it. All sites where it is known are from below ca. 300 m altitude⁵.

The species is believed likely to be affected by habitat loss and alteration through widespread conversion of forests to agro-industrial and forestry plantations as well as forest fires and swidden agriculture. However, residents in West Kalimantan indicated that the species was most often encountered in immature forest, “tembawang” (cultivated forest planted with fruit trees) and along river edges. This indicates that the species can survive in at least partially modified habitats. An individual was found in 2008 by a survey team in West Kalimantan in a tembawang forest within a recently developed oil palm plantation⁴.

There has been a rapid emergence of illegal trade in this species since 2013. Intelligence reports suggest that more than 40 individuals were collected in spring 2014⁶ and at least 95 individuals were offered for sale on the internet during a 17 month period⁷. There have been seizures of at least 35 *L. borneensis* from Indonesia between October 2015 and March 2016^{8, 9, 10}. Specimens advertised as captive-bred are recorded in trade. This species is highly desirable, reported to be reaching prices of USD 7500 to 9000 on the illegal market.

This species has been fully protected throughout its range in Malaysia since 1971, Indonesia since 1980, and Brunei Darussalam since 1978, and it has never been legally exported. Therefore all specimens in trade appear to have been illegally obtained, or are the progeny of specimens illegally obtained.

Analysis: *Lanthanotus borneensis* is a rarely observed species known from relatively few locations, a number of which have only recently been discovered. It may be more widespread than current records indicate. There are no population estimates although there are indications that it may be at least locally not uncommon. It is believed likely to be declining owing to habitat loss and alteration, although there are indications that it can survive in modified habitats. Overall, there is insufficient information to determine whether it meets the criteria for listing in Appendix I. The species is in demand for, and potentially affected by, trade. Harvest and trade is illegal in all range States.

Reviewers: D. Bennet, I. Das, V. Weijola and K. Krishnasamy.

References:

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

¹ Shirawa, T. & Bacchini, S. (2015) Captive Maintenance and the first reproduction of Borneo Earless Monitors (*Lanthanotus borneensis*). *HerpNation*. 18:8-20.

² Das, I. (2010). Reptiles of Southeast Asia. New Holland Publishers, United Kingdom.

³ Sprackland, R.G. (2010) *Guide to lizards*. TFH Publications, Neptune City.

⁴ Yaap, B., Paoli, G. D., Angki, A., Wells, P.L. Wahyudi, D. & Auliya, M. (2012) First record of The Borneo Earless Monitor *Lanthanotus borneensis* (Steindachner, 1877) (*Reptilia: Lanthanotidae*) in West Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo) *Journal of Threatened Taxa* 4:3067-3074.

⁵ Krishnasamy, K. (2016) *In litt.* to the IUCN/TRAFFIC Analysis Team, Cambridge, UK.

⁶ Nijman, V. & Stoner, S. S. (2014) *Keeping an ear to the ground: monitoring the trade in Earless Monitor Lizards*. TRAFFIC Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia.

⁷ Stoner, S. & Nijman, V. (2015) The case for CITES Appendix I-listing of Earless Monitor Lizards *Lanthanotus borneensis*. *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 27:55-58.

⁸ Regional.Kompas (2016) Paket Bertuliskan "Mie Ramin", Isinya Biawak Tak Bertelinga.
<http://regional.kompas.com/read/2016/03/15/17180021/Paket.Bertuliskan.Mie.Ramen.Isinya.Biawak.Tak.Bertelinga>.
Viewed on 9th June 2016.

⁹ News Detik (2015) Bareskrim Polri Tangkap Warga Jerman yang Coba Selundupkan Hewan Langka
<http://news.detik.com/berita/3046178/bareskrim-polri-tangkap-warga-jerman-yang-coba-selundupkan-hewan-langka>
Viewed on 9th June 2016.

¹⁰ Wildlife Crimes Unit (2016) Wildlife Crimes Unit. <https://www.facebook.com/wildlifecrimesunit/> Viewed on 9th June 2016.