

**Additional information on the proposal to include *Uroplatus* spp.
(Leaf-tailed Geckos) in Appendix II of CITES**

This document has been submitted by the Government of Madagascar

Proposal 27: Additional information on the proposal to include *Uroplatus* spp. (Leaf-tailed Geckos) in Appendix II of CITES

The following additional information has been provided by Dr. Christopher Raxworthy, Curator for Herpetology, American Museum of Natural History and one of the reviewers of this proposal for the IUCN/TRAFFIC analyses of the proposals submitted to CoP13, on October 5th.

The proposal to move all species of *Uroplatus* to Appendix II is warranted for the following reasons:

- 1) ***Uroplatus* appear to live at low density in the wild.** For example, in most suitable habitats, it is rare to find more than one individual per person-hour of searching (based on experienced herpetologists working at night).
- 2) ***Uroplatus alluaudi*, *U. malama*, *U. malahelo*, *U. pietschmanni* have very restricted distributions, and are also easily confused with other species (*U. ebenauai*, *U. guentheri*, *U. sikorae*).** There is great demand by a growing body of enthusiasts for the most rarely collected species – especially *U. alluaudi*, *U. malama*, *U. malahelo*, *U. guentheri*. The small numbers of these species being exported till 2003 reflect only the difficulty in collecting them – they do not reflect the actual global demand. *U. pietschmanni* is now frequently seen in trade (often called the cork-bark gecko). Many species are now being listed for sale e.g. <<http://www.alinereptiles.com/geckos.html>>. This website is currently selling wild caught *U. malahelo*, an ultra-rare gecko known from just 3 sites in Madagascar.
- 3) The rapid recent increasing demand for these species by the pet-trade is cause for concern- **22,000 individuals in three years (2001-2003) represents a very large number of geckos**, considering the typical low density and cryptic habits of these species.
- 4) **I am aware of at least one reserve where commercial collecting has already depleted populations** in a strict nature reserve (Lokobe, Nosy Be). *Uroplatus henkeli* were taken from the reserve at night by commercial collectors using flashlights for several years. Montagne d'Ambre National Park also appears to have been targeted for commercial collecting of *U. ebenauai* and *U. alluaudi*. Other suspected collecting areas include Marojejy, Anjanaharibe-Sud, Mananara-Nord, Ambatovaky, Betampona, Mantadia, Ranomafana, Ankarafantsika and Bemaraha. Because commercial collecting is usually done at night, forests with easy access are usually selected for collecting. Many reserves in Madagascar are especially vulnerable because of their easy access, and lack of security at night within the protected area boundaries. Collecting will naturally concentrate on the easy access sites, and **due to the low density of the populations, yields are unlikely to be sustainable for any *Uroplatus* populations.**