Uromastyx ocellata Lichtenstein, 1823

FAMILY: Agamidae

COMMON NAMES: Eyed Dabb Lizard, Ocellated Mastigure, Ocellated Uromastyx, Eyed Spiny-tailed Lizard, Smooth-eared (English); Fouette-queue Ocellé (French); Lagarto de Cola Espinosa Ocelado (Spanish)

GLOBAL CONSERVATION STATUS: Currently being assessed by IUCN Global Reptile Assessment.

SIGNIFICANT TRADE REVIEW FOR: Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan

Range States selected for review

Range States	Exports* (1994-2003)	Urgent, possible or least concern	Comments
Djibouti	0	Least concern	No trade reported
Egypt	4 528	Least concern	Export of species banned since 1992. No exports recorded since 1995.
Eritrea	0	Least concern	No trade reported
Ethiopia	477	Least concern	Ethiopia's CITES Authorities confirm its presence. Trade levels low. Export quotas in place based on population surveys.
Somalia	0	Least concern	No trade reported
Sudan	11,702	Least concern	Main exporter; low levels of trade (< 3000 yr^{-1}). No systematic population monitoring in place to determine non-detriment.

SUMMARY

Uromastyx ocellata, commonly known in the pet trade as the Ocellated Spiny-tailed Lizard, is recorded from Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan. Ethiopia's CITES Scientific Authority also report that the species is found in that country. It is found in wadis in rocky mountainous desert with acacia trees.

U. ocellata is reportedly fairly common in some range States, although regarded as declining in some areas. If it occurs at population densities comparable to those of other *Uromastyx* species, its population is likely to number at minimum several hundred thousand individuals.

Reported exports of *U. ocellata* during the period 1994-2003 were mainly from Sudan (11,702) and Egypt (4,528) with Ethiopia also exporting specimens. Little is known of the population status in the major exporting States. No systematic population monitoring is in place in Sudan, and no information is available regarding non-detriment findings for exports from that country. However, low levels of annual exports are unlikely to have a significant impact on the wild population. Trade from Sudan should therefore be considered as Least Concern. The situation should be reviewed if any significant increase in trade volumes is noted. As exports from Egypt appear to have ceased after 1995, following a government ban on exports, trade from that country is Least Concern. According to CITES Authorities in Ethiopia, harvest quotas are based on population census data and revised accordingly. Exports are at relatively low levels, with trade from this country therefore considered of Least Concern. No trade has been reported from Djibouti, Eritrea or Somalia.

SPECIES CHARACTERISTICS

Uromastyx ocellata, commonly known in the pet trade as the Ocellated Spiny-tailed Lizard, is a medium–sized lizard that can reach a total length of 28-32cm (Baha El Din, 2001; Lossau and Lossau, undated). Specimens can be brightly coloured, although coloration varies considerably according to age, sex and breeding condition (Baha El Din, 2001; IUCN *in prep*.).

The species is recorded from Djibouti, southeastern Egypt, Eritrea, northwestern Somalia and northern Sudan (IUCN, *in prep*.). It also apparently occurs in the Aboka region of eastern Ethiopia (CITES

Management Authority for Ethiopia *in litt,* 2006). It is a diurnal rock-dwelling animal found in wadis in mountainous rocky desert with Acacia trees. It retreats to cracks and crevices between large boulders, and sometimes burrows in the beds of wadis (IUCN, *in pre*p.).

Little specific information is available on the ecology of *U. ocellata* in the wild. *Uromastyx* species in general are oviparous with clutch sizes between 8 to 20 eggs. Eggs are laid in female burrow systems in the late spring-early summer or at the beginning of the dry season. They hatch after an incubation period of approximately 8 to 10 weeks (Bahiani *et al.*, 1997; Schliech *et al.*, 1996; Zug *et al.,* 2001) and the hatchlings stay within the burrow system for several weeks to months before leaving to establish their own burrows (Peters, 1971). The smaller *Uromastyx*, of which *U. ocellata* is one, may reach sexual maturity in two or three years (Gray, 1995). Wild-caught *Uromastyx* specimens have been known to live for 20 years in captivity with estimates of life span of 25 years (Bartlet, undated).

As adults, *Uromastyx* species appear to be exclusively herbivorous, feeding on a wide range of desert vegetation. Acacia is reportedly a favoured food source of *U. ocellata* and the species has been observed climbing Acacia trees to feed (Baha El Din, 2001). Young *Uromastyx*, in captivity at least, readily take insects and other invertebrates (Gray, undated; Pough *et al.,* 2001; Schleich *et al.*, 1996).

The species has a wide range, with an extent of occurrence of several millions of hectares (IUCN *in prep*.). It is reportedly fairly common in Egypt although regarded as declining in some areas (Baha El Din, 2001). Population estimates from Ethiopia suggest the species is locally abundant. Studies of the closely related *U. acanthinura* in very arid environments in Algeria have estimated population densities of between 0.1-1.0 individuals per hectare (Schliech *et al.,* 1996; Vernet *et al.* 1988), while studies of *U. aegyptius* in somewhat more productive environments in the Middle East have found densities of up to six animals per hectare (Robinson, 1995). Its overall population seems very likely to be at minimum several hundred thousand animals.

A draft assessment undertaken within the framework of the IUCN Global Reptile Assessment indicate that the species is affected by collection for subsistence use for food and by collection for export in the pet trade (IUCN, *in prep.*). However, no data on rates of collection or intensity of exploitation are available. The assessment also indicates that the species is affected by habitat loss from quarrying as well as acacia extraction for charcoal (IUCN, *in prep.*). Participants at a workshop in Malaga assessed the species within the range States bordering the Mediterranean as Near Threatened, citing a significant decline because of over-collection for food, medicine and the international pet trade, and habitat degradation, thus making the species close to qualifying for Vulnerable under Criteria A2cd. (IUCN, *in prep*.).

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

A number of *Uromastyx* species are internationally traded for the pet trade, and all were listed in CITES Appendix II in 1977.

Table 1: Exports excluding re-exports of live wild *Uromastyx ocellata*, 1994-2003

Export Country	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Total
Sudan			568		1231	1969	2496	1222	1821	2395	**11702**
Egypt	2430	2093							5		**4528**
Ethiopia								46	127	304	**477**
Total	**2430**	**2093**	**568**	**0**	**1231**	**1969**	**2496**	**1268**	**1953**	**2699**	**16 707**

COUNTRY ACCOUNTS

Djibouti

Status:

No details of distribution located.

Management and trade:

No exports of *Uromastyx ocellata* were recorded during the period 1994-2003 and therefore trade in *U. ocellata* is of Least Concern.

Egypt

Status:

The species is distributed in the mountains of the eastern desert. According to Saleh (1997) and Wilms and Böhme (2000) its range extends north to approximately 24°30'N although others document its widespread occurrence further north in the Gebel Shyeb El Banat – Gebel Abu Dukin region (Baha El Din, 2001; Hobbs 1989). Archive records of the species are considered to be an indicator of past occurrence of Acacia-dominated habitat (Baha El Din, 2001; Goodman *et al.,* 1992).

Management and trade:

Although a ban on trade in *U. ocellata* (and *U. acanthinura*, *U. aegyptius* and *U. ornata*) was declared by the Egyptian Government in 1991 (CITES Notification No 662 of 16 January 1992) considerable imports of the species originating in Egypt were still recorded by importing countries in 1994 and 1995. In addition just over 600 specimens of *U. acanthinura* were reported as imported from Egypt although this species is not reported to occur in Egypt, along with a number of specimens imported as *Uromastyx* spp. (1,408 in 1994, 2,893 in 1995, 198 in 1996, 294 in 1998); at least some of these could have been *U. ocellata.* However, no imports or exports of *Uromastyx* species from Egypt have been recorded since 1998 and therefore trade in *U. ocellata* from Egypt is considered of Least Concern.

Eritrea

Status:

No details of distribution located.

Management and trade:

No specimens of *Uromastyx ocellata* in international trade in the period 1994-2003 were reported as originating in Eritrea. The CITES Management Authority of Eritrea believes that there is no harvest for domestic use or export of the species (*in litt.,*2005). There have been no surveys to determine the status of the species in the country. In the absence of reported harvest in this species, trade from Eritrea is of Least Concern.

Ethiopia

Status:

Ethiopia is not known as a range State (UNEP-WCMC, 2006). However, the CITES Management Authority confirms the occurrence of the species in the eastern part of the country in the Somali Region a Aboker (*in litt,* 2006.).

Management and trade:

Exports of *U. ocellata* have been reported from 2001, with a total of 477 individuals, the majority exported in 2003. Trade data in Ethiopia's filed annual reports correspond roughly to the reports of importing Parties.

A census of *Uromastyx ocellata* was conducted in 2000 estimating the population at 10,000. Following this an annual export quota of 3,600 specimens was set. Reported exports have been far below this level. The Scientific Authority recommended that trade be banned in the species from June 2004. In 2005 the quota was reduced to 500, based on the 2000 census, considering an offtake of 5% within sustainable limits for this species. Ethiopia reported 100 exports of captive-bred specimens in 2004. No further population surveys have been carried out; therefore the impact of harvesting on

the wild population is unknown. However, exports, with Ethiopia's trade control measures, are unlikely to have a significant impact on the wild population and therefore are of Least Concern.

Somalia

Status:

The species' range includes north-western Somalia (IUCN, *in prep*., Wilms, 2001).

Management and trade:

No trade in specimens originating in Somalia was recorded between 1994 and 2003. Fifteen specimens of *Uromastyx princeps*, a Somalian endemic, have been recorded as originating in Somalia. In the absence of reported trade in this species trade from Somalia it is considered of Least Concern.

Sudan

Status:

The species' range extends inland to Dongola and Um Durman (Wilms and Bohme, 2000).

Management and trade:

The greatest numbers of exports in *Uromastyx ocellata* have originated in Sudan with exports exceeding 1,000 individuals each year from 1998 to 2003. *U. ornata*, a sub-species of *U. ocellata*, is also reported as being exported from Sudan. As Sudan is not a known range State for *U. ornata* it seems likely these are specimens of *U. ocellata*. This would increase the total trade over the period 1994-2003 to 14,903 individuals, with the highest exports of *U. ornata* occurring in 2000 of 930 individuals. Some of the trade in the species originating from the Sudan has been illegal, with 81 specimens illegally traded in 2000 and 51 in 2001. Given the possible wild population, the level of offtake for recorded international trade is unlikely to have a significant impact on the wild population and is therefore of Least Concern. Nevertheless it appears that the wild population is not monitored, no quotas are set and no information has been found on whether non-detriment findings have been established, and if so, on what basis. The situation should be re-reviewed if any significant increase in trade volumes is noted.

PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED THAT ARE NOT RELATED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE IV, PARAS 2(a), 3, or 6(a)

Taxonomy of *Uromastyx* in general is still not completely settled, and different names continue to be used, making it difficult to assess the impact of trade on particular populations. Wilms (2001), the recommended taxonomic reference for *Uromastyx* under CITES, recognises four species in the *U. ocellata* complex: *U. ocellata* itself, *U. benti* (subject to a separate significant trade review), *U. ornata* and *U. macfaydeni*, although acknowledges that questions remain over the identity of *U. macfaydeni*. He considers the taxon *philbyi* to be a subspecies of *U. ornata.* Other authors (eg Schätti and Gasperetti, 1994) consider all these taxa to be conspecific under *U. ocellata*. It is possible that some of the records in trade *U. ocellata* actually refer to these other taxa.

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