

## CONSERVATION RESEARCH REPORTS

### Erosion Netting a Threat to Snakes and Lizards

Erosion netting consists of woven mats of seed-implanted straw or jute layered between two sheets of netting. The most commonly used size of netting is 20 x 20 mm. Although supposedly photodegradable, netting may remain intact after as many as eight years. WALLEY ET AL. (2005. *Journal of Kansas Herpetology* 16): 26–28) documented the threat of this netting to lizards and snakes, which become entrapped in it. Entangled animals may perish from heat exposure or starvation or suffer injuries that might prove fatal due to constriction of vital organs or infection.



GARY CASPER

Butler's Gartersnake (*Thamnophis butleri*) from Ozaukee County, Wisconsin showing injuries from erosion netting.

### CITES-listed Lizards in the French Pet Trade

During the 1990s, over 100,000 CITES-listed lizards were imported by the French pet trade, with the numbers per year increasing dramatically during the last half of the decade. Reporting results of a study funded by WWF-France, AFFRE ET AL. (2005. *Herpetological Review* 36:133–137) examined the data pertaining to imports of CITES-listed lizard into France, which is a growing distribution center for reptilian pets in Europe. The top five species imported during the 1990s were *Iguana iguana*

(over 40,000 individuals, mostly from the United States), *Phelsuma madagascariensis* (almost 6000 individuals, almost all from Madagascar), *Uromastyx acanthinura* (over 5000 individuals, mostly from Mali), *Chamaeleo senegalensis* (over 5000 individuals, nearly all from Senegal), and *Varanus exanthematicus* (nearly 4000 individuals, largely from Togo). Data indicated that increasing numbers of imported CITES-listed lizards were captive-bred, reflecting the farming of Green Iguanas (*I. iguana*) in Central and northern South America. These data, however, are misleading in regard to other listed species, which are almost always wild-caught, as are many non-listed species for which data are lacking and about the status of which we know essentially nothing.



JOHN BINNS

During the 1990s, nearly 4000 Savannah Monitors (*Varanus exanthematicus*) were imported by the French pet trade, mostly from Togo.

### Habitat Quality and Australia's Most Endangered Snake

Fire suppression over the past two centuries has produced increases in vegetation density and canopy cover in many Australian landscapes, potentially affecting small populations of nocturnal reptiles that use exposed shelters for diurnal thermoregulation. WEBB ET AL. (2005. *Copeia* 2005: 894–900) tested the effect of removing overhanging vegetation from shaded rocks on use by Australia's endangered Broad-headed Snake, *Hoplocephalus bungaroides*. One year after clearing vegetation, basking rocks were hotter and were used more frequently by three reptilian species, including Broad-headed Snakes and an important prey species (Velvet Geckos, *Oedura lesueurii*). The authors suggest that, until effective fire management measures are in place, sapling removal from overgrown rock

outcrops could help to protect small populations of endangered reptiles.



PAVEL GERMAN/WILDLIFE IMAGES

Australia's endangered Broad-headed Snake (*Hoplocephalus bungaroides*) may benefit from clearing vegetation that has overgrown basking sites after two centuries of fire suppression.

### Island Boas of Belize

Boa Constrictors (*Boa constrictor*) inhabiting islands off the coast of Belize have been heavily collected for the pet trade, which describes these as a "dwarfed" race. BOBACK (2005. *Copeia* 2005: 880–885) determined that, compared to mainland boas, island boas have significantly smaller litters of smaller neonates and have extraordinarily small population sizes that range from 8–88. Evidence of declining population sizes and application of IUCN criteria indicate that island populations of Belizean boas warrant immediate conservation priority due to their low reproductive output, small population sizes, and continued demand in the pet trade.



SCOTT M. BOBACK

This adult male Crawl Cay Boa (*Boa constrictor*; 116 cm SVL) was one of only about eight free-ranging individuals on an island that has been heavily impacted by collection. After completion of the initial study, the author returned to the cay in 2003 to find that more land had been cleared and that a new structure was being built. In only a very short amount of time, the author and his colleagues found no boas.