



NOTES and SHORT COMMUNICATION

AN ANALYSIS OF SEIZURES OF TOKAY GECKO *Gekko gecko* IN THE PHILIPPINES

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ABSTRACT – The Tokay Gecko *Gekko gecko* is traded internationally in the millions annually for use in traditional medicines and to a lesser extent, for the pet trade. The vast majority of Tokay Geckos are collected in the wild and apparent captive-bred individuals may be in fact wild-caught as well. A get-rich-quick scheme involving the trade of Tokay Gecko across Southeast Asia began in 2009. Foreign buyers were purportedly willing to pay PHP1,000,000-500,000,000 (USD20,000-10,000,000) for Tokay Geckos weighing 300-1,000g per individual to cure human immunodeficiency virus (HIV/AIDS), impotence, and cancer. Seizure data between 2010 and 2012 from seven islands in the Philippines documented 24 cases involving 2,092 Tokay Gecko individuals. A proposal to list the Tokay Gecko in the CITES Appendix II was submitted by the Philippines, European Union, India, and the United States to monitor, regulate, and assist in preventing illegal and unsustainable trade and was eventually accepted by the Parties during the 18th meeting of the Conference of Parties (CoP18) in August 2019. We strongly recommend CITES Parties make full and effective use of CITES in preventing over-exploitation of the Tokay Gecko.

Keywords: CITES, Gekko gecko, Illegal Wildlife Trade, Philippines



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