NSW SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Determination to make a minor amendment to Schedule 1 of the Threatened Species Conservation Act

The Scientific Committee, established by the *Threatened Species Conservation Act* 1995 (the Act), has made a determination to amend the list of ENDANGERED SPECIES by inserting *Ctenophorus mirrityana* (McLean, Moussalli, Sass & Stuart-Fox 2013), Barrier Range Dragon, in Part 1 of Schedule 1 of the Act and, as a consequence, omitting reference to *Ctenophorus decresii* (Dumeril & Bibron 1837), Tawny Crevice-dragon. This amendment is the result of a change in the name of the species following taxonomic revision. This determination is made pursuant to Division 5 of Part 2 of the Act.

The Scientific Committee has found that:

1. The Tawny Crevice-dragon, *Ctenophorus decresii* (McLean, Moussalli, Sass & Stuart-Fox 2013) (family Agamidae) was originally listed as an Endangered species in Schedule 1 of the *Threatened Species Conservation Act* 1995 on 20/12/2002. Individuals in NSW were recently recognised by McLean *et al*. (2013) as a separate species *Ctenophorus mirrityana* Barrier Range Dragon.

2. The Barrier Range Dragon *Ctenophorus mirrityana* is described by McLean *et al.* (2013) as: "a moderately-sized dragon lizard reaching a maximum snout-vent length (SVL) of approximately 91 mm and total length of 266 mm. Head strongly compressed and small for body size (relative to other members of the species complex); nostril located beneath a sharp canthus rostralis. Body and base of tail dorsoventrally flattened, allowing the species to squeeze into narrow rock crevices. Tail long and evenly tapered to a fine tip; forelimbs moderately long reaching or almost reaching groin when adpressed; hindlimbs long and reaching or almost reaching snout when adpressed, digits are long and slender; finger lengths: 4<3<2<1; toe lengths: 4<3<2<1. Characteristic of the genus *Ctenophorus*, a row of enlarged, keeled scales extends from the nostril, below the eye to above the tympanum (Houston & Hutchinson, 1998). Scales on snout are keeled to lightly wrinkled; eyelid fringed with row of acute scales; 14−19 supralabial and infralabial scales; 4−6 scales between rostral and nasal; 4−6 scales between supralabial and nasal; 9−12 internasal scales; 21–27 subdigital lamellae on the fourth toe. The skin on the neck is loose, forming folds of skin above and behind the tympanum with small rows of pale coloured spines. A low nuchal crest of conical scales is present and terminates in line with the shoulders. Vertebral scales are flat and pale in colour and can be raised on a fold of skin during behavioural displays. Dorsal scales are smooth or very lightly keeled, becoming smaller laterally; flanks lack scattered tubercular scales. Scales on the dorsal surfaces of the limbs and tail are keeled. A strongly formed gular fold is present, extending across the shoulders. Ventral scales are around the same size as vertebral scales, larger than dorsal and lateral scales, flat and homogenous, with the exception of the scales along the gular fold which are smaller. Thirty four to forty two evenly spaced femoral and preanal pores are arranged in a straight line along the thighs, interrupted medially by 7−9 scales. Pores are present but smaller in females.

   Adult male base colour varies from grey-blue to very pale blue which appears bluer when the lizard is warm. The vertebral line is pale, becoming more grey-blue towards the flanks, while the dorsal surfaces of the head, tail and hindlimbs are grey-brown. The head is orange around the eyes, nostrils and along the upper jaw, and beneath the tympanum to the neck; however, the extent and brightness of this coloration varies among individuals. A black lateral stripe begins posterior to the eye, becoming thicker posterior to the tympanum and terminating at the groin. A thinner, non-continuous orange stripe, often bordered by pale blotches, begins at the tympanum and runs within the black lateral stripe to the groin. Pale blue coloration mottled

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with cream occurs beneath the lateral stripe and on the forelimbs. Ventrally males are white to cream with orange flushes on the belly, hindlimbs, and tail during the breeding season. A grey to black chest patch tapers to a point midbody and extends along the forelimbs in some individuals. Male throat coloration consists of cream base colour with parallel grey stripes along the length of the throat, often overlain with orange flushes around the snout, which may cover the whole throat in some individuals. A distinct black stripe runs along the mid line from gular fold to snout but varies in length and intensity among individuals. Adult females are cryptically coloured with brown, grey, and terracotta speckling. Dorsally, scales are browner with a thin, pale vertebral line. A black lateral stripe coupled with a thin terracotta stripe runs laterally along the flank, although this may be less prominent than in males. Scales are greyer on the flanks below the lateral stripe. Ventrally females are white to cream with grey stripes on the throat and orange flushes on the belly during the breeding season. Juveniles resemble adult females in coloration and pattern but are often paler with more delicate speckling. Pattern remains clear on spirit preserved specimens; however, both males and females appear darker than in life and any orange coloration fades considerably."

3. Within the *Ctenophorus decresii* species complex, the Barrier Range Dragon is distinguishable by the following characteristics: "head relatively small for body size; snout scales keeled or weakly wrinkled; vertebral scales flat and pale in colour; black lateral stripe from tympanum to groin; thinner, non-continuous orange stripe within black lateral stripe; flanks lack tubercular scales; male throat colouration pale cream with parallel grey stripes and black central stripe sometimes overlain with orange flushes" (McLean *et al.* 2013).

4. The Barrier Range Dragon is currently known from four sites, all in western NSW. These are Mutawintji National Park and adjacent properties (Swan & Foster 2005), the Silverton Wind Farm site (35 km north west of Broken Hill) (Sass & Swan 2010), Broken Hill and Koonenberry Mountain (70 km north of Mutawintji) (Australian Museum records).

5. The Scientific Committee is of the opinion that an amendment to the Schedule is necessary or desirable to reflect a change in the name of a species in Schedule 1 as a result of taxonomic revision.

Professor Michelle Leishman
Chairperson
NSW Scientific Committee

References:

McLean CA, Moussalli A, Sass S, Stuart-Fox D (2013) Taxonomic assessment of the *Ctenophorus decresii* Complex (Reptilia: Agamidae) reveals a new species of dragon lizard from western New South Wales. *Records of the Australian Museum* **65**, 51–63.

Sass S, Swan G (2010) A newly discovered population of the endangered tawny rock dragon *Ctenophorus decresii* in far western NSW and description of its habitat. *Herpertofauna* **40**, 52–57.

Swan G, Foster R (2005) The reptiles and amphibians of Mutawintji National Park, Western New South Wales. *Australian Zoologist* **33**, 39–48.