

Caribbean Herpetological Society

Barbadian of Guyanese & Trinidadian parentage re-discovers once presumed extinct Barbados Leaf-Toed Gecko (*Phyllodactylus pulcher*)

On Sunday 2nd October 2011 founder of the Caribbean Herpetological Society Damon Corrie was conducting a field survey in a remote part of Barbados with his sons Hatuey & Tecumseh, and daughter Sabantho and they made what many would consider to be the Herpetological discovery of a lifetime, they found a pair of the once feared to be extinct endemic Barbados Leaf-Toed Gecko (*Phyllodactylus pulcher*); this small lizard is only found on the Caribbean island of Barbados according to internet sources.

The Corries are tight-lipped about the exact location of this rare find as they fear others will descend on the area in order to obtain a specimen of what is undoubtedly one of the rarest Geckos left on Earth, 38 year-old Damon Corrie said he has been searching in vain all his life from the age of 13 to find the 2 rarest Reptile species in Barbados - the Barbados grass snake (*Liophis perfuscus*) and the Barbados Leaf-Toed Gecko (*Phyllodactylus pulcher*) - both of which were last sighted so many decades ago that they were both presumed to be extinct.



© Damon G Corrie
Barbados Leaf-Toed Gecko Re-Discovered



© Damon G Corrie
Phyllodactylus pulcher at left and Hemidactylus mabouia at right

Corrie had not planned to go public with his exciting discovery as he recalls how Professor Blair Hedges of the USA came to Barbados several years ago with his wife Carla and paid Damon US\$100 to show them where to find the smallest snake in the world, the Barbados Thread snake (*Leptotyphlops carlae*) - which the Professor subsequently named after his wife - after claiming that he had 'discovered the snake himself' with no assistance from Damon or any other Barbadian; so with that bad memory in mind Damon decided to publicize his find now before another foreigner comes to Barbados and dishonestly claims to have found this species as well.

Corrie is more concerned that since this last remnant population they found is in an isolated spot earmarked for imminent construction development - there is a good chance now that this little lizard species that has existed in Barbados long before the first humans ever set foot on the island's shores

will TRULY go extinct as a local endemic species if he does not do anything to save it, personally Damon would like to captive-breed them and release the sub-adults into other safer areas of the island, but he would require the co-operation of the Ministries of Agriculture and Natural Heritage to set up a captive-breeding program here in Barbados in order to save the species.

Additionally - Corrie is urgently asking the Natural Heritage Department of the Barbados Government to immediately submit a request of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) body in Geneva Switzerland to list the Barbados Leaf-Toed Gecko (*Phyllodactylus pulcher*) as an Appendix 1 species - forbidding the trade in it to all but for Zoological collections only; and to have the remote location of the remnant surviving population to be declared a National Protected area and see that it is saved from any construction which will be a de-facto 'destruction' for this ancient Barbadian species.

Barbados born Damon Corrie describes himself as a 'Caribbean man' with a Trinidadian father and a mother of Guyanese Amerindian descent, an autodidact Herpetoculturalist, Damon has conducted Herpetological surveys in Barbados, Guyana (where he found a new Tarantula species), Trinidad, Saint Vincent, Dominica, Sint Maarten, Saaba, Sint Eustatius and the Dominican Republic.



Damon Corrie in Guyana