



The United States Attorney's Office

Central District of California



United States Attorney's Office

Central District of California

Thom Mrozek
Public Affairs Officer

(213) 894-6947
thom.mrozek@usdoj.gov

Return to the 2008 Press Release Index
Release No. 08-039

April 11, 2008

LONG BEACH MAN CONVICTED OF CONCEALING HIGHLY ENDANGERED IGUANAS THAT HAD BEEN ILLEGALLY IMPORTED INTO THE UNITED STATES

A Long Beach, California man has been convicted of federal charges for concealing several extremely rare iguanas that had been illegally imported into the United States.

Jereme James, 34, was found guilty yesterday of one count of concealing and one count of possessing the endangered animals.

The Fiji Island banded iguana (*Brachylophus fasciatus*) is threatened with extinction and is protected under an international treaty known as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. While on a trip to Fiji in September 2002, James allegedly abducted three hatchling Fiji Island banded iguanas from an ecological preserve, and then allegedly brought them to the United States.

After receiving a tip that James possessed several specimens of the endangered species, the United States Fish & Wildlife Service opened an undercover investigation. During the investigation, James told an undercover operative that he sold a trio of Fiji Island banded iguanas four years ago for \$32,000. After a series of meetings with the defendant, Fish & Wildlife Service agents executed a search warrant at James' house in July and recovered four Fiji Island banded iguanas.

James is scheduled to be sentenced by United States District Judge Manuel Real on July 14, 2008. At sentencing, James faces a maximum possible sentence of twenty years in federal prison.

#####

Release No. 08-039
Return to the 2008 Press Release Index