

To: Debra Hill, debra_hill@fws.gov
From: Troy L. Best, Auburn University
Date: 27 January 2011
Subject: Proposed rule to list dunes sagebrush lizard (*Sceloporus arenicolus*) as endangered throughout its range

I have read the proposed rule to list the dunes sagebrush lizard (*Sceloporus arenicolus*) as endangered (Federal Register, 2010, 75:77801-77817). I have examined the cited literature and note one correction: the citation of Whitfield et al. (2000) on page 77811 should be Gibbons et al. (2000). Copies of some of the literature were incomplete, but that did not present significant problems in assessing the proposal. The scientific evidence is sound and strongly supports the listing of this species as endangered.

The proposal does an excellent job in providing reasons why the shinnery oak habitat occupied by the dunes sagebrush lizard is essential for its survival. The proposal also presents a thorough analysis of causes of the degradation and destruction of this habitat.

In the discussion of "Competition" on page 77813, I suggest that it would have been useful to generally compare diet of the side-blotched lizard (*Uta stansburiana*) to that of the dunes sagebrush lizard in the shinnery oak habitat. These data are available in Degenhardt and Jones (1972) and Best and Gennaro (1985, *Journal of Herpetology* 18:291-301). It appears to me that these species generally ate the same categories of foods; thus, competitors for food resources.

I believe the assumptions and conclusions in the proposed rule are well supported. They are based upon reasonable interpretations and representations of the information produced by excellent scientific research. In my opinion, the dunes sagebrush lizard should be listed as endangered based upon the evidence presented in the proposed rule.