

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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THE GIANT ANOLE LIZARD OF CULEBRA ISLAND PROPOSED FOR ENDANGERED LIST

The Giant Anole, a 24-inch lizard of Culebra Island, Puerto Rico, has been proposed as Endangered on the U.S. List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife, Keith M. Schreiner, Associate Director of the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, announced today.

The proposal, published in the January 10, 1977, Federal Register, also includes a determination of Critical Habitat for the species.

Interested persons have until April 7, 1977, to comment on the proposal.

Persons wishing to participate in this rulemaking should submit written comments to the Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240, (ATTN: FWS/WPO).

The large lizard may survive only in the high tree canopy of the forested slopes of Mt. Resaca on Culebra Island. The fan-leaved palm, tallest tree in the forest, and indeed the semi-moist forest in general, are quickly disappearing because of man's activities. Unless the remaining habitat on Mt. Resaca is protected, this lizard could become extinct, according to Fish and Wildlife Service biologists.

The Giant Anole is very rare; few specimens occur in the museums of the world. Some doubt has already been expressed as to whether this species still survives. However, herpetologists most familiar with Caribbean species believe that it still exists in small numbers on Culebra. It is hoped that this proposed action will stimulate exploratory and conservation activities for this unique lizard.

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