

**ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT  
HERITAGE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

**Animal Abstract**

**Element Code:** ARACE01010

**Data Sensitivity:** Yes

**CLASSIFICATION, NOMENCLATURE, DESCRIPTION, RANGE**

**NAME:** *Heloderma suspectum*  
**COMMON NAME:** Reticulated Gila Monster  
**SYNONYMS:**  
**FAMILY:** Sauria: Helodermatidae

**AUTHOR, PUBLICATION:** Cope

**TYPE LOCALITY:** Sierra de la Union, Arizona.

**TYPE SPECIMEN:**

**TAXONOMIC UNIQUENESS:** Two species in genus (*H. horridum* restricted to Mexico);  
Two subspecies of *Heloderma* (*suspectum* and *cinctum*), and both occur in Arizona.

**DESCRIPTION:** Stebbins 1966:138-139. A large (snout-vent 18-24 inches and tail 1/3 to 1/2 body length), heavy-bodied lizard. Small bead-like scales dorsally, with broken spots, bars, blotches or orange, salmon, yellow, pink, black and/or blackish brown.

**AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION:**

**ILLUSTRATIONS:** Black and white drawing (Stebbins 1966: plate 17)  
Color photo (Behler and King 1979: plate 332)

**TOTAL RANGE:** Extreme southwest Utah and southern Nevada south to southern Sonora;  
extreme southwest New Mexico west to Colorado River.

**RANGE WITHIN ARIZONA:** West and Southwest half of state.

**SPECIES BIOLOGY AND POPULATION TRENDS**

**BIOLOGY:**

**REPRODUCTION:** Lays 3-5 eggs, fall or winter.

**FOOD HABITS:** Small mammals, eggs of birds and reptiles.

**HABITAT:** In Arizona, primarily in Sonoran Desert and extreme western edge of Mohave Desert, less frequent in desert-grassland and rare in oak woodland, to ca 4100 feet. Most common in undulating rocky foothills, bajadas and canyons. Less frequent or absent on open sandy plains.

**ELEVATION:**

**PLANT COMMUNITY:**

**POPULATION TRENDS:** Decreasing only in heavily urbanized or agricultural areas. Locally common elsewhere.

### **SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION**

**ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT STATUS:** None  
[*H.s. cinctum* – None, USDI, FWS 1996]  
[*H.s. cinctum* - C2 (USDI, FWS 1994)]  
[Full Species - 3C (USDI, FWS 1989)]  
[Full Species - C2 (USDI, FWS 1985)]  
**STATE STATUS:** 1A (AGFD SWAP 2012)  
**OTHER STATUS:** A, Determined Threatened in Mexico  
(NORMA Oficial Mexicana NOM-059-SEMARNAT-2010)  
None, USDA FS Region 3, 2013  
[Forest Service Sensitive USDA, FS Region 3 2007]  
[Forest Service Sensitive USDA, FS Region 3 1988]

**MANAGEMENT FACTORS:** Agency interest because one of only two poisonous lizards in entire world; active pet trade. Habitat preservation, especially of denning sites.

**PROTECTIVE MEASURES TAKEN:** Pet trade regulated.

**SUGGESTED PROJECTS:** Distribution, habitat, population and life history studies.

**LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP:**

### **SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION**

**REFERENCES:**

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**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

**Revised:** 1991-03-27 ( )  
1998-01-30 (SMS)  
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