

REPTILES

CBD to Sue USFWS Over Colorado Checkered Whiptail Lizard Non-Status

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By John Virata

The Center for Biological Diversity today announced its intent to sue the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service due to the service's apparent failure to determine whether the Colorado Checkered Whiptail lizard (*Aspidoscelis neotesselata*) warrants protections under the Endangered Species Act.

The lizard, which was first petitioned for protection in 2012, grows to about 4 inches in length and lives in arroyos, canyons, and valleys in Colorado. It is also a parthenogenic species.

“Time is running out for this little guy,” Collette Adkins Giese, a Center biologist and lawyer focused on protecting amphibians and reptiles said in a statement. “Because this lizard lacks legal protections, humans



continue to destroy its habitat when we should be conserving essential areas. Endangered Species Act protection will change that.”

According to federal law, after a species is petitioned for Endangered Species Act protections, the USFWS must make an initial determination whether the species warrants protections, called a finding, within 90 days. According to the Center, the agency has not acted.