

## **Translocation of Duvaucel's geckos and shore skinks to Tiritiri Matangi Island, Motuora Island and Massey Captive Breeding Facility**

Weihong JI\*

Marleen BALING

Manuela BARRY

Chris WEDDING

Dylan VAN WINKEL

Ben BARR

Dianne H BRUNTON

Ecology and Conservation Group, Institute of Natural Resources, Private Bag 102-904, North Shore Mail Centre, Auckland, New Zealand. m.baling@massey.ac.nz

\*j.j.weihong@massey.ac.nz

New Zealand reptiles have undergone large geographical range contractions and extinctions over the past years of human colonisation and predator introductions. Translocation is a good way to promote conservation and increase distribution range of rare or restricted species such as Duvaucel's geckos. Continual harvesting from wild populations may reduce the health of that population because of their need to recover from the sudden decline in numbers. Captive breeding of lizards as an alternative option will enable individuals to be produced to be founders for new metapopulations without negative effects on the smaller wild populations. In December 2006, 69 Duvaucel's geckos were collected from Korapuki Island and 120 shore skinks from Tawharanui Regional Park. After 20 days quarantine for disease screening, these lizards were released to three locations: Tiritiri Matangi Island, Motuora Island and Massey University's Reptile Captive Facility. The aims of this project are: (1) To establish self sustaining wild populations of Duvaucel's geckos and shore skinks on two managed islands in the Hauraki Gulf to support ecological restoration and education objectives; (2) To establish captive breeding populations that will be used as a source population for future translocations without the need for further impact on wild populations; (3) To assess the degree of risk posed by ground-feeding native birds to the successful reintroduction of large ground-dwelling threatened lizards, using Duvaucel's gecko as an analogue for threatened *Cyclodina* skinks.