



UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum

*Championing UK's most special species:
the wildlife of UK's Overseas Territories (UKOTs) and
Crown Dependencies (CDs)*

FACT-SHEET ON:

Galliwasp lizard *Diploglossus montisserrati*
UK Overseas Territory: Montserrat

The Montserrat Galliwasp lizard is endemic to (found naturally only in) Montserrat and was discovered and described formally as recently as 1964. However, sightings are very infrequent, and it was thought to be extinct, with no sightings from the time of its formal description in 1964 until 1998. The species is thought to have suffered further from loss of its woodland habitat and ash-fall resulting from the Soufrière Hills volcanic eruptions from 1995. It is classified as Critically Endangered and may be one of the most endangered lizards in the world.

Animals can reach 180 mm snout-to-vent, or 40 cm (15 inches) overall, and have short legs. With very few sightings, their distribution, population size and behaviours are largely unknown, though they are believed to prefer moist woodland habitats, especially montane forest. They spend much of their time in holes underneath large rocks.

They are most active in the early mornings and late evening, and possibly during the night, when they emerge to feed on insects.

For the Montserrat Galliwasp and several other unique species



All Galliwasp photos taken at the Montserrat home of Dr Bridget Beattie, in early 2019 by Bridget's daughter Emma and son-in-law Stuart. The rare Galliwasp visited their garden for some time, which obligingly stayed around for photography. © Beano

to survive, conservation of the natural forests is essential. More research is needed on the distribution, behaviour and requirements of this species.

