

American Malacological Society (AMS) Conservation Committee Imperiled Species News

October 2014

Greetings American Malacological Society (AMS) members and mollusk conservation enthusiasts. As part of a continuing series of installments, I am herein posting this 2014 summary of all legislative action taken during from January through September 2014 by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) regarding conservation of marine, freshwater, and terrestrial mollusks as applied by the U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA) and other relevant legislation.

If you are wondering why you have not received any postings recently, that's because there hasn't been anything to post! Up until September 23rd the Federal Register has not seen a single proposal put forth during this time relating to addition or removal of mollusks under the Endangered Species Act. All prior proposals were reviewed and closed resulting in no required action for any species. Two five-year status reviews, however, have come and gone (my mistake for the lack of announcement- see below). On September, 23rd, a five-year status review was announced for 27 species including 12 freshwater mussels. These include the southern acornshell (*Epioblasma othcaloogensis*), ovate clubshell (*Pleurobema perovatum*), southern clubshell (*Pleurobema decisum*), upland combshell (*Epioblasma metastrata*), triangular kidneyshell (*Ptychobranthus greenii*), Coosa moccasinshell (*Medionidus parvulus*), southern pigtoe (*Pleurobema georgianum*), Alabama heelsplitter inflated form (*Potamilus inflatus*), Alabama moccasinshell (*Medionidus acutissimus*), and orange-nacre mucket (*Lampsilis altilis*).

What does a five-year review entail? When assessing a five-year review (which is required of every listed species in order to maintain its listing), the following items are considered; the best scientific and commercial data available since the listing determination including species biology (population, distribution abundance, demographics, genetics), habitat considerations (remaining, distribution, suitability), status and trend (recovery factors), and other new information or corrections (taxonomic change, erroneous information, improved analytical methods). If you have ANY knowledge of this information for any of the species up for review, please remit your comments to the Alabama Ecological Services Field Office:

Fish and Wildlife Service
1208-B Main Street
Daphne, AL 36526
Fax: 251-441-6222

For information on these species, contact Jeff Powell at the ES Field Office by phone (251-441-5181) or email (jeffpowell@fws.gov). ALL COMMENTS ARE DUE ON OR BEFORE NOVEMBER 24, 2014. Please mark this date on your calendar and submit your comments. This is the principle way to make an individual difference in the potential conservation of a rare or endangered mollusk species. Anyone can comment and all comments are encouraged and considered.

Public comment period for designation of Critical Habitat was reopened for Neosho mucket (*Lampsilis rafinesqueana*) and rabbitsfoot (*Quadrula cylindrica cylindrica*) and announced on May 14. Similarly, on July 8, 2014, a five-year status review was opened for Curtis' pearlymussel (*Epioblasma florentina curtisi*), purple cat's paw (*Epioblasma (= dynomia) obliquata obliquata*), scaleshell mussel (*Leptodea leptodon*), and Higgins eye (*Lampsilis higginsii*). A five-year review was initiated some time ago for Curtis' pearlymussel and scaleshell mussel but never completed. As an aside, how annoying is it when you type a scientific name and your word processing program automatically attempts to correct it to a known vocabulary word that it most likely approximates. I keep adding to the list of "do not modify" mollusk scientific names such as "Quadrula cylindrical, Lampsilis radiate", *Alasmidonta triangulate*", "*Alasmidonta varicose*", "Elliptio product", and so on. I use Microsoft Word as my chosen word processing program and for those who use the same, you can avoid this annoying feature by highlighting the Review Tab and choosing Spelling and Grammar and selecting Add to Grammar. I'll take my thanks in freshwater pearls, please.

Unfortunately, comments were only accepted until July 14th for the former and September 8th for the latter and I was not on the ball enough to inform you all of these announcements (you may have your pearls back). Please excuse my accidental omission from previous posts. Public comment period extensions are the result of public requests (including one from Arkansas Senator Mark Pryor) to allow for more time for the public to review the document as there has been significant interest in Arkansas about the proposed Critical Habitat designation. This is not too uncommon but should not dissuade any of you from commenting on future proposals in a timely fashion. Some proposals that have already been put forth will likely have comment periods reopened because, to put it bluntly, many of us do not bother to reply or would like to reply but do not know how. Well, now's your chance.

Currently, twelve mollusk species still remain as candidates: Texas fatmucket (*Lampsilis bracteata*), Texas fawnsfoot (*Truncilla macrodon*), Texas hornshell (*Popenaias popei*), magnificent ramshorn (*Planorbella magnifica*), fragile tree snail (*Samoana fragilis*), Guam tree snail (*Partula radiolata*), humped tree snail (*Partula gibba*), Landford's tree snail (*Partula langfordi*), sisi snail (*Ostodes strigatus*), Tutuila tree snail (*Eua zebrina* or zebrine if you are using Microsoft Word), Huachuca springsnail (*Pyrgulopsis thompsoni*), and Page springsnail (*Pyrgulopsis morrisoni*). No species are up for proposal.

This does not mean that upcoming candidate proposals are not forthcoming. There are still dozens of species that have not yet been assessed but are in need of conservation action. Future postings will periodically include updates to current and proposed candidates so keep track of comment periods as they are set and make a valuable contribution toward endangered mollusk conservation by contributing insights and comments.

Last year marked the 40th Anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Endangered Species Act. President Richard Nixon signed the act into law on December 28, 1973. Currently there are over 2100 total species listed under the USESA. Over 30 species (including *Infectarius magazinensis* (Magazine Mountain shagreen) have reached full recovery and been removed from listing. At the end of the last calendar year, eleven mollusk species were formally added to the USESA and designated as Endangered and one as Threatened. Fourteen species remained as candidates. Of these, five are freshwater mussels, three are freshwater snails, and six are terrestrial snails. As new proposals are put forth, I will do my best to keep you all abreast of changes as they happen including deadlines for submitting comments or questions so that they might be offered in a timely fashion.

Cheers,

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SUMMARIES FOLLOW:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Releases Annual List of Candidates for Endangered Species Act Protection

12 Freshwater Mussel Species

- POSTED: September 23, 2014
- SUMMARY: 5-year status review of 27 listed southeastern species (including 12 mussel species- *Epioblasma othcaloogensis* (southern acornshell), *Pleurobema perovatum* (ovate clubshell), *Pleurobema decisum* (southern clubshell), *Epioblasma metastriata* (upland combshell), *Ptychobranchnus greenii* (triangular kidneyshell), *Medionidus parvulus* (Coosa moccasinshell), *Pleurobema georgianum* (southern pigtoe), *Potamilus inflatus* (Alabama heelsplitter inflated form), *Medionidus acutissimus* (Alabama moccasinshell), and *Lampsilis altilis* (orange-nacre mucket) as Endangered or Threatened; many with Critical Habitat designated = **review initiated**
- JUSTIFICATION: To be determined.
- RESULTS: Public comments and scientific and commercial data solicited (submission deadline November 24, 2014).
- LINK: <http://www.fws.gov/policy/library/2014/2014-22594.pdf>

4 Freshwater Mussel Species

- POSTED: July 8, 2014

- SUMMARY: 5-year status review of 9 listed animal species (including 4 mussel species- *Epioblasma florentina curtisi* (Curtis' pearly mussel), *Epioblasma* (= *dysnomia*) *obliquata obliquata* (purple cat's paw), *Leptodea leptodon* (scaleshell mussel), and *Lampsilis higginsii* (Higgins eye) as Endangered or Threatened; many with Critical Habitat designated = **review initiated**
- JUSTIFICATION: To be determined.
- RESULTS: Public comments and scientific and commercial data solicited (submission deadline September 18, 2014).
- LINK: <http://www.fws.gov/policy/library/2014/2014-15867.pdf>

***Lampsilis rafinesqueana* (Neosho mucket) and *Quadrula cylindrica cylindrica* (rabbitsfoot)**

- POSTED: May 14, 2014
- SUMMARY: Proposed Rule to dedicate Critical Habitat for *Lampsilis rafinesqueana* (Neosho mucket) and *Quadrula cylindrica cylindrica* (rabbitsfoot) = **comment period reopened**
- JUSTIFICATION: To be determined.
- RESULTS: Public comments and scientific and commercial data solicited (submission deadline July 14, 2014).
- LINK: <http://www.fws.gov/policy/library/2014/2014-10944.pdf>

Submit by U.S. mail or hand-delivery to: Public Comments Processing, Alabama Ecological Services Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1208-B Main Street, Daphne, AL 36526; fax 251-441-6222. For information on these species, contact Jeff Powell at the ES Field Office (by phone at 251-441-5181, or by email at jeff@powell@fws.gov).