

Peer Review of Scientific Information

Proposed Designation of Critical Habitat for Alabama Sturgeon

Species: Alabama sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus suttkusi*)

About the Document

Title: Proposed Designation of Critical Habitat for the Alabama Sturgeon in Alabama.

Summary: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is proposing to designate critical habitat for the Alabama sturgeon pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act). We are proposing to designate approximately 524 kilometers (326 miles) of river as critical habitat. The proposed critical habitat includes portions of the Alabama and Cahaba rivers in Autauga, Baldwin, Bibb, Clarke, Dallas, Lowndes, and Perry counties, in Alabama.

Type of Review: Influential

Timeline of the Peer Review (Estimated Dates):

Draft document disseminated: May 27, 2008

Peer review initiated: August 29, 2008

Peer review completed by: October 17, 2008

Date Document will be finalized: May 27, 2009

About the Peer Review Process:

The Service will solicit written comments from three independent scientific reviewers. Formal request for peer review were made to experts with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the University of Alabama, and the Florida Museum of Natural History. These reviewers were selected by the Service for their recognized expertise with the Alabama sturgeon. This review will occur during the public comment periods for the proposed action. The first comment period closed on July 27, 2008. A second comment period will in open in October or November 2008. The Service will use the information received from the peer review, as appropriate, to develop the final critical habitat rule for the Alabama sturgeon.

About Public Participation:

Public comments on the Alabama sturgeon proposed critical habitat rule were sought with a Federal Register announcement on May 27, 2008, and the distribution by mail and press release of this announcement to interested parties. This comment period ended on July 28, 2008. A second comment period will open with the announcement in the Federal Register of the availability of the economic analysis. This comment period is expected in October or November of 2008 and will include the proposed rule. This peer review plan is made available on this website to allow the public to monitor our compliance with the Office of Management and Budget's "Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review."

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