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Endangered Species Act Protection Not Needed for 10 Species in the Southeast

Atlanta, Ga. – The Cumberland arrow darter, Shawnee darter, Sequatchie caddisfly, American eel, and six Tennessee cave beetles do not need protection under the Endangered Species Act.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – upon reviewing the status of these 10 species – found their status to be stable, and in some cases much better than expected. The Service’s close partnership with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency were crucial to this positive announcement.

“The species must face a threat large enough to cause a reduction in its range or the size of its populations, so that animals meet the definition of threatened or endangered,” said Southeast Regional Director Cindy Dohner. “Fortunately, that level of threat isn’t present for these species at this time and the populations are stable. It isn’t enough just to be rare.

“The Service could not get this work done on its own. We are proud of the partnership we have with our state fish and wildlife agencies, private landowners, federal agencies, conservation groups, and industry across the Southeast, who are working in a concerted effort to conserve species, keep working lands working and reduce regulatory burden.”

- As a result of recent searches, biologists with the Service and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources determined that the Cumberland arrow darter occupies 98 streams, a large increase compared to a previous record of 60 streams. It also benefits from existing laws and regulations designed to protect other listed fishes in those streams. Additionally, biologists determined that the Cumberland arrow darter appears to use larger streams more frequently than previously believed, potentially increasing the amount of occupied habitat and reducing the fish’s susceptibility to catastrophic events like chemical spills or severe drought that can severely impact smaller streams. In addition, the fish has benefited from management actions associated with the Daniel Boone National Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan, as well as range-wide distributional surveys and habitat analyses completed by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission, and Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency.
- The Shawnee darter is found in the Pond River watershed in four western Kentucky counties and is widely distributed within its range. Survey efforts by the Service indicate

that the Shawnee darter is maintaining healthy populations. Reviews of past and current land use and water quality data found no significant threats to the fish.

The Sequatchie caddisfly, an aquatic insect, only lives in three streams in the world, all in Marion County, Tennessee. Only a single individual has been seen in one of those springs, and it is not known if that was a chance occurrence or if the spring once harbored a population of the insect. Recent searches led scientists to conclude that thousands of individuals remain in the other two streams, one of which is found in Sequatchie Cave Park, managed by the Marion County government.

- While the American eel, found in freshwater, estuarine, and marine waters from the Labrador region of Canada to South America, still faces local mortality from harvest and hydroelectric facilities, these stressors are not threatening the American eel as a population or species, and it remains widely distributed throughout much of its historical range. This is the second time the Service has evaluated the American eel for listing under the ESA and found listing not warranted, the first coming in 2007.
- The six cave beetles (Coleman, Fowler's, Inquirer, Insular, Noblett's, and Soothsayer Cave beetles) are known from a total of 11 limestone caves in Montgomery, Clay, Davidson, DeKalb, and Monroe counties, Tennessee. Upon closer examination, though rare, the Service found no evidence the beetles were in decline or were being impacted by the suspected stressors. Additionally, biologists have worked to conserve several of the caves. Two of the caves are owned by private individuals who have entered into management agreements with conservation partners, including the Service, The Nature Conservancy, and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. Another cave and a key cave entrance are now owned by the state of Tennessee.

The decisions on these 10 species comes as the Service works to evaluate whether more than 450 plants and animals occurring the Southeast Region may need federal protection. The six cave beetles, Cumberland arrow darter and Sequatchie caddisfly were [candidates](#) for protection, while the American eel and Shawnee darter were reviewed as the result of petitions under the Endangered Species Act.

The Endangered Species Act allows anyone to petition the Service to place an animal on the endangered species list. The Service is implementing a court-approved work plan under a Multi-District Listing Agreement aimed at addressing a series of lawsuits concerning the agency's ESA listing program. The intent of the agreement is to significantly reduce a litigation-driven workload. For more information about the work plan, see <http://www.fws.gov/southeast/candidateconservation/workplan.html>.

In addition, the Service is taking proactive steps with multiple partners to limit the need to list species where possible. This has led to a broader partner-driven effort in the Southeast to more fully use flexibilities within the ESA to put the right conservation in the right places, benefit imperiled species, keep working lands working and reduce regulatory burden. With today's announcement, work on the 'at-risk' species initiative with states, conservation groups, private

landowners and industry has enabled the Service to determine that listing is not needed for more than 40 species—some based on new information, some on voluntary conservation actions, and some are already secure.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov/southeast. Connect with us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/usfwssoutheast, follow our tweets at www.twitter.com/usfwssoutheast, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws>, and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwssoutheast>.

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