

## NEWS RELEASE

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October 31, 2016

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### **Chucky Madtom Draft Recovery Plan Available for Review**

The Chucky madtom's recovery now has a road map and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is looking for your input before it is finalized to be sure it gives conservationists the best chance to ensure the rare catfish once again thrives in East Tennessee.

A comment period for interested citizens, landowners, scientists, conservation groups, and businesses, will open on November 1, 2016, and close on January 3, 2017.

“The Chucky madtom is extremely rare and hard to find in the wild with most likely fewer than 100 remaining,” said Leopoldo Miranda, the Service's Assistant Regional Director for Ecological Services in the Southeast Region. “We will be working closely with private landowners and communities where madtoms live along with state and federal agencies, universities, and conservation groups to find other possible populations and protect its habitat.

“We believe this recovery plan and input from citizens that helps us improve it, will help us do the work we need to do to recover the Chucky madtom before time runs out on us,” Miranda said.

Chucky madtoms are found in a single tributary to the Nolichucky River in eastern Tennessee in stream sections 16 to 23 feet wide in riffle and run areas bordered by water willow beds with slow to moderate current over pea-sized gravel, cobble, or slab-rock substrates.

The draft recovery plan describes actions considered necessary for the recovery of the listed madtom, establishes criteria for downlisting the madtom, and estimates the time and cost for implementing the needed measures.

The initial recovery strategy for the Chucky madtom is to prevent its extinction by locating individuals and working with partners and the community to protect and improve existing habitat along Little Chucky Creek. The recovery objective over the next decade is to work to reduce threats in order to upgrade the Chucky madtom's status from endangered to threatened.

Defining reasonable delisting criteria is not possible at this time given the current low number of individuals, extreme curtailment of the madtom's range, extensive modification and fragmentation of habitat within its historical range, and lack of information about its biology. Other threats to the madtom include its inability to offset mortality with natural reproduction and

recruitment, and its resulting vulnerability to catastrophic events, such as droughts or pollution, Active management and monitoring will be crucial to help this madtom overcome all of these threats.

To view the draft recovery plan, the Recovery Implementation Strategy, or the Species Biological Report on the web, please visit <http://www.fws.gov/cookeville/>. Request a paper copy of the plan and its associated documents by contacting the Service's Tennessee Ecological Services Field Office at 931-525-4981.

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