



## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# News Release

*Idaho Fish and Wildlife Office*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE FINDS UTAH (DESERT) VALVATA SNAIL NO LONGER NEEDS PROTECTION

BOISE, IDAHO - The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced it will remove the Utah valvata snail (*Valvata utahensis*) from the federal List of Threatened and Endangered Wildlife.

The decision was made based on new scientific information that demonstrates the snail is more widely distributed and occurs in more habitat types than was known at the time the species was listed. The Utah valvata snail was listed as endangered in 1992, along with four other southern Idaho aquatic snail species.

On July 16, 2009, a 12-month finding and proposed rule to delist the snail was published in the Federal Register. The 60-day public comment period closed in September, 2009. After a thorough review of best available scientific information, the Service finds that the species is not in danger of extinction or likely to become so in the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

The Service's decision follows a 12-month review of the species, initiated by a petition to delist the Utah valvata snail filed by the Governor of Idaho and attorneys for several Idaho irrigation districts.

"We reviewed the best available scientific data and conducted peer review on that information, which provided more current information about the species, its habitat requirements and distribution," said Brian Kelly, State Supervisor of the Service's Idaho Fish and Wildlife Office. "Based on our current understanding after this review, the Utah valvata snail no longer needs protection under the Endangered Species Act."

Data collected since 1992 show that Utah valvata snails are more widely distributed than known at the time of listing. The snail has been found at locations in over 255 river miles of the Snake River. Originally thought to require free-flowing cool-water environments, new scientific information indicates the snail occurs in a variety of aquatic habitats, including spring outflows, the mainstem of the Snake River and its reservoir/impounded reaches, and can persist in a wide range of water temperatures and depths.

Although the non-native New Zealand mudsnail, considered a threat in 1992, has invaded areas occupied by Utah valvata snails, presence of New Zealand mudsnails in shared habitats has not resulted in the documented loss of local Utah valvata snail populations from any portion of their range after 20 years of co-existence.

For further information, please contact Steve Duke, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Idaho Fish and Wildlife Office, 1387 S. Vinnell Way, Suite 368, Boise, Idaho 83709, 208-378-5243.

*The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).*

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