

Frequently Asked Questions

Why did the Service consider the angular dwarf crayfish, Icebox Cave beetle, and Clifton Cave beetle for the endangered species list?

The Endangered Species Act allows anyone to request, or petition, the Service to add a plant or animal to the federal endangered species list. The Service was petitioned to place all three of these animals on the list, and all but the crayfish have been considered candidates for the threatened and endangered species list. The Service is in the midst of a multi-year work plan to address these species, and evaluating these animals is part of the scheduled 2016 workload.

Why is the Service not placing them on the endangered species list?

In order to be placed on the endangered species list, a plant or animal must face threats leading to endangerment or extinction in the foreseeable future. The Service determined these animals aren't facing threats that warrant placing them on the endangered species list.

Species information

Angular dwarf crayfish

Where does the angular dwarf crayfish live?

- Baldwin, Mobile, and Washington counties, Alabama
- George County, Mississippi

What contributed to the decision not to list the angular dwarf crayfish?

The crayfish is found in heavily vegetated ponds, sluggish streams, and backwater areas. Though little is known about the crayfish, its habitat is abundant, and there's no indication that it faces any significant threats.

Clifton Cave beetle

Where does the Clifton Cave beetle live?

- Clifton Cave and Richardson's Spring Cave, Woodford County, Kentucky

What contributed to the decision not to list the Clifton Cave beetle?

- Although the Clifton Cave beetle is known from only two caves, it faces no known threats leading to extinction or endangerment in the foreseeable future. Clifton Cave was discovered when construction workers inadvertently created an opening to it. That opening has since been closed, leaving no known entrance large enough for humans, likely eliminating the possibility of direct human impact. In Richardson's Spring Cave, biologists have actually seen more beetles recently than when the animal was first discovered there. Both caves are situated in a rural landscape where little landscape-level change is anticipated.

Icebox Cave beetle

Where does the Icebox Cave beetle live?

- Icebox Cave, Bell County, Kentucky

What contributed to the decision not to list the Icebox Cave beetle?

- Although the Icebox Cave beetle is only known from a single cave, a 2015 search effort found the beetle persisting at numbers consistent with previous searches. The cave shows signs of historical human visitation, but it shows no evidence of more recent visitation or use, lowering concerns about direct human impact. This cave also is found in a rural landscape where little landscape-level change is foreseen.

Virgin Islands coqui

Where does the Virgin Islands coqui live?

- Historically, the Virgin Islands coqui was found on St. John in the U.S. Virgin Islands; however, surveys there have been no sightings of the species since the 1970s. Meanwhile, in the British Virgin Islands, a survey was conducted to evaluate the habitat use and distribution of frog species between 1993 and 1997 which confirmed the presence of the Virgin Islands coquí on the islands of Tortola, Virgin Gorda, Jost Van Dyke, Great Dog, Beef Island, and Frenchman’s Cay.
- The Virgin Islands coquí is found on six islands in the British Virgin Islands. Although we do not have survey data on the population, the species continued to persist on these islands. Continued persistence of the species on the island is due to past and present management efforts by the British Virgin Islands territory government. Rate of deforestation has declined from historical high in the twentieth century due to the transition in the British Virgin Island’s economy from cash crop to tourism as well as the establishment of protected areas. These protected areas helped maintain and protect remaining forest habitats. Additionally, these areas have allowed deforested habitat to recover, promoting new secondary deciduous and dry forests.

What is the Service’s determination regarding the petition’s request to designate critical habitat for the Virgin Islands coqui?

- Under the Act and its implementing regulations, critical habitat will be proposed, to the maximum extent prudent and determinable, at the time we issue a proposed listing rule. (50 CFR 424.12(a)). For the Virgin Islands coqui, we found that listing is not warranted. Therefore, we did not evaluate whether critical habitat is prudent and determinable for the species.

Public role in conservation

How can people support the ongoing conservation of these beetles and other cave animals?

- **Proper disposal of chemicals** – Caves are connected by subterranean networks that are rarely obvious above ground and can stretch for miles. Pollution entering one of these networks at one point, say a sinkhole in a field, can contaminate ground water at a cave miles away, harming the animals in that cave.
- **Staying out of caves with known rare species** – A certain way to avoid trampling is simply to stay out of caves with rare animals. Additionally, in order to minimize the chance of people inadvertently carrying white-nose syndrome between caves, the Service recommends staying out of all caves.

- **Gating** – One way landowners can control access to caves on their land is to install metal gates that allow bats and other animals to move in and out, but prevent people from entering.

How can people support the conservation of the crayfish and other aquatic animals?

- Plant native trees and shrubs along bodies of water and allow these areas to grow naturally. The root systems hold bank soil in place; branches and leaves provide shade that lowers water temperature; and the plants filter stormwater runoff, removing harmful chemicals and silt that can pollute and clog waterways.
- Look for ways to move rainwater off paved and other impervious surfaces, allowing it to soak into the ground. When channeled off paved surfaces and into streams, rainwater carries pollutants (e.g., oils, road salt) and excess water from paved surfaces, eroding stream banks and stream bottoms not structured to handle the excess water. Helpful techniques include using pervious pavements, rain barrels, and installing rain gardens – gardens where rainwater is channeled and allowed to soak into the ground.
- Let naturally fallen woody material remain in streams and lakes.
- Keep bodies of water free of trash.

More information

Where can I find more information on these species or the listing process?

- Angular dwarf crayfish: Call the Mississippi Ecological Services Field Office at 601/965-4900.
- Clifton Cave beetle: Call the Kentucky Ecological Services Field Office at 502/695-0468.
- Icebox Cave beetle: Call the Kentucky Ecological Services Field Office at 502/695-0468.
- Virgin Islands coqui: Call the Boqueron, Puerto Rico, Ecological Services Field Office at 787-851-7297,

Listing process – Visit <https://www.fws.gov/southeast/candidateconservation/>