



U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office

Conserving the Biological Diversity of the Great Basin, Eastern Sierra, and Mojave Desert

Questions and Answers

42 Species of Great Basin and Mojave Desert Springsnails 90-Day Finding

September 12, 2011

Q. What are springsnails?

A. Springsnails are aquatic mollusks that live in freshwater springs. Springsnails are very small and vary in size, but no larger than 4mm.

Q. Why did the Service complete a 90-day finding under the Endangered Species Act for the springsnails?

A. The Service completed a 90-day finding in response to a petition filed February 17, 2009, by the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD), Tierra Curry, Noah Greenwald, Dr. James Deacon, Don Duff, and the Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society. The petition requested the listing of 42 species of Great Basin and Mojave Desert springsnails in Nevada, Utah, and California as threatened or endangered with critical habitat under the ESA.

Q. Where are the species of springsnails reviewed under the petition located?

A. The springsnails covered in this finding are endemic (found nowhere else) to Great Basin and Mojave Desert freshwater springs in Clark, Elko, Lincoln, Nye, and White Pine Counties in Nevada; Millard and Beaver County in Utah; and Inyo County in California.

NOTE: A full listing of the species included in this finding is attached at the end of this document.

Q. Does this finding address all 42 species of springsnails named in the petition?

A. No. The Service addressed three of the 42 species in a 90-day finding dated August 18, 2009. That finding determined that substantial scientific or commercial information exists in Service files and was presented in the petition indicating that listing may be warranted for those three species.

Q. What were the results of the 90-day finding?

A. The finding means that the Service has determined there is substantial information in the petition and in the Service's files to warrant an in-depth status review of 32 of the 42 springsnails in the petition. Seven of the petitioned species will not be reviewed further due to the lack of substantial supporting information.

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Q. What kinds of threats to the springsnails will the Service investigate?

A. Springsnails rely on perpetual sources of water for survival. Groundwater pumping poses the greatest potential threat, because pumping can reduce the volume of spring water rising to the surface. The petitioners contend there is a potential for permitted groundwater rights to approach or exceed the annual recharge rate for the aquifer, meaning the current rate of groundwater use is unsustainable. It is their position that groundwater pumping by farmers, ranchers, communities, renewable energy interests, and developers pose the greatest threat to the springsnails.

Q. What is the 12-month status review intended to accomplish?

A. Based on the in-depth status review, the Service will issue a 12-month finding on the petition making one of three possible determinations:

- 1) Listing is not warranted, in which case no further action will be taken.
- 2) Listing as threatened or endangered is warranted. In this case, the Service will publish a proposal to list, solicit independent scientific peer review of the proposal, seek input from the public, and consider the input before a final decision about listing the species is made. In general, there is a one-year period between the time a species is proposed and the final decision.
- 3) Listing is warranted but precluded by other, higher priority activities. This means the species is added to the Federal list of candidate species, and the proposal to list is deferred while the Service works on listing proposals for other species that are at greater risk. A warranted but precluded finding requires subsequent annual reviews of the finding until such time as either a listing proposal is published, or a not warranted finding is made based on new information.

Q. What kind of information is the Service looking for from the public?

A. To assist in our review, the Service is seeking information on:

- (1) The species' biology, range, and population trends, including:
 - (a) Habitat requirements for feeding, breeding, and sheltering;
 - (b) Genetics and taxonomy;
 - (c) Historical and current range including distribution patterns;
 - (d) Historical and current population levels, and current and projected trends; and
 - (e) Past and ongoing conservation measures for the species, its habitat or both.
- (2) The factors that are the basis for making a listing/delisting/downlisting determination for a species under section 4(a) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act) (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), which are:
 - (a) The present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range;
 - (b) Overutilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes;

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- (c) Disease or predation;
- (d) The inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms; or
- (e) Other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence.

Q. What kind of information will the Service need if the agency proceeds to determining critical habitat?

A. If, after the status review, we determine that listing any of the 32 springsnail species is warranted, we will propose critical habitat. Within the geographical range currently occupied by each of the 32 springsnail species, we will request data and information on:

- (1) What may constitute “physical or biological features essential to the conservation of the species;”
- (2) Where these features are currently found; and
- (3) Whether any of these features may require special management considerations or protection.

Additionally, the Service will request data and information on “specific areas outside the geographical area occupied by the species” that are “essential to the conservation of the species.”

Q. How can the public or any interested party provide information?

A. The finding will publish in the *Federal Register* on September 13, 2011. Written comments on regarding the springsnails proposal may be submitted by one of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments to Docket No. [FWS-R8-ES-2011-0001].
- U.S. mail or hand-delivery: Public Comments Processing, Attn: Docket No. [FWS-R8-ES-2011-0001]; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 2042-PDM; Arlington, VA 22203.

Comments must be received within 60 days, on or before November 14, 2011. The Service will post all comments on <http://www.regulations.gov>. This generally means the agency will post any personal information provided through the process. The Service is not able to accept email or faxes.

For more information about the springsnails and this finding, please visit the Service’s Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office web site at <http://www.fws.gov/nevada/>.

Supporting documents used in preparing this finding are available for inspection, by appointment during normal business hours, at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office, 4701 North Torrey Pines Drive, Las Vegas, NV, 89130; telephone (702) 515-5230; facsimile (702) 515-5231. Please submit any questions concerning this finding to the above address or fax.

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The 32 springsnail species warranting in-depth status reviews:

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	HYDROGRAPHIC AREA(S)	COUNTY, STATE
<i>Pyrgulopsis avernalis</i>	Moapa pebblesnail	Upper Muddy River Springs	Clark, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis breviloba</i>	Flag pyrg	Dry Lake & White River	Lincoln & Nye, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis carinifera</i>	Moapa Valley pyrg	Upper Muddy River Springs	Clark, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis coloradensis</i>	Blue Point pyrg	Black Mountains Area (Lake Mead)	Clark, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis crystalis</i>	Crystal springsnail	Amargosa Desert	Nye, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis deaconi</i>	Spring Mountains pyrg	Las Vegas Valley & Pahrump Valley	Clark, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis erythropoma</i>	Ash Meadows pebblesnail	Amargosa Desert	Nye, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis fairbanksensis</i>	Fairbanks springsnail	Amargosa Desert	Nye, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis fausta</i>	Corn Creek pyrg	Las Vegas Valley	Clark, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis hubbsi</i>	Hubbs pyrg	Pahranagat Valley	Lincoln, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis isolatus</i>	Elongate gland springsnail	Amargosa Desert	Nye, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis landyei</i>	Landyes pyrg	Steptoe Valley	White Pine, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis lata</i>	Butterfield pyrg	White River Valley	Nye, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis marcida</i>	Hardy pyrg	Cave Valley & White River Valley	Lincoln, Nye & White Pine, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis merriami</i>	Pahranagat pebblesnail	Pahranagat Valley & White River Valley	Lincoln & Nye, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis nanus</i>	Distal gland springsnail	Amargosa Desert	Nye, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis neritella</i>	Neritiform Steptoe Ranch pyrg	Steptoe Valley	White Pine, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis orbiculata</i>	Sub-globose Steptoe Ranch pyrg	Steptoe Valley	White Pine, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis peculiaris</i>	Bifid duct pyrg	Snake Valley & Spring Valley	White Pine, NV & Millard, UT
<i>Pyrgulopsis pisteri</i>	Median gland Nevada pyrg	Amargosa Desert	Nye, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis planulata</i>	Flat-topped Steptoe pyrg	Steptoe Valley	White Pine, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis sathos</i>	White River Valley pyrg	White River Valley	Lincoln, Nye & White Pine, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis serrata</i>	Northern Steptoe pyrg	Steptoe Valley	Elko and White Pine Cos., NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis sterilis</i>	Sterile Basin pyrg	Ralston Valley & Stone Cabin Flat	Nye, NV

<i>Pyrgulopsis sublata</i>	Lake Valley pyrg	Lake Valley	Lincoln, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis sulcata</i>	Southern Steptoe pyrg	Steptoe Valley	White Pine, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis turbatrix</i>	Southeast Nevada pyrg	Las Vegas Valley, Indian Springs, Pahrump Valley, Amargosa Flat & Frenchman Flat	Clark & Nye, NV
<i>Tryonia angulata</i>	Sportinggoods tryonia	Amargosa Desert	Nye Co., NV
<i>Tryonia clathrata</i>	Grated tryonia	Upper Muddy River Springs, White River Valley & Pahrnagat Valley	Clark, Lincoln & Nye, NV
<i>Tryonia elata</i>	Point of Rocks tryonia	Amargosa Desert	Nye, NV
<i>Tryonia ericae</i>	Minute tryonia	Amargosa Desert	Nye, NV
<i>Tryonia variegata</i>	Amargosa tryonia	Amargosa Desert	Inyo, CA & Nye, NV

The 3 springsnail species not included in this 90-day finding†:

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	HYDROGRAPHIC AREA	COUNTY, STATE
<i>Pyrgulopsis anguina</i>	longitudinal gland pyrg	Snake Valley	White Pine, NV & Millard, UT
<i>Pyrgulopsis hamlinensis</i>	Hamlin Valley pyrg	Hamlin Valley	Beaver, UT
<i>Pyrgulopsis saxatilis</i>	sub-globose snake pyrg	Snake Valley	Millard, UT

† These species were addressed in a separate 90-day finding on a petition to list 206 species of springsnails in the Midwest and western United States (August 18, 2009; 74 FR 41649).

The 7 springsnail species for which an in-depth review is not warranted:

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	HYDROGRAPHIC AREA	COUNTY, STATE
<i>Pyrgulopsis aloba</i>	Duckwater pyrg	Railroad Valley North	Nye, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis anatina</i>	Southern Duckwater pyrg	Railroad Valley North	Nye, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis gracilis</i>	Emigrant pyrg	White River Valley	Nye, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis lockensis</i>	Lockes pyrg	Railroad Valley North	Nye, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis montana</i>	Camp Valley pyrg	Meadow Valley Wash (Camp Valley)	Lincoln, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis papillata</i>	Big Warm Spring pyrg	Railroad Valley North	Nye, NV
<i>Pyrgulopsis villacampae</i>	Duckwater Warm Springs pyrg	Railroad Valley North	Nye, NV

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