

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

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FIVE FISH SPECIES PROPOSED AS ENDANGERED

Five species of fish found in North Carolina, Arkansas, and Tennessee have been proposed for the endangered list by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Keith M. Schreiner, Associate Director, announced today.

The proposal, published in the December 30, 1977, Federal Register, also lists critical habitat for the Waccamaw darter, Waccamaw killifish, Waccamaw silverside, Ouachita madtom, and Barrens topminnow. Interested persons have until February 28, 1978, to comment on this rulemaking.

North Carolina's Lake Waccamaw, where three of the species occur, is a shallow, mostly sandy bottomed, coastal plain lake that is spring-fed. Its clear water is in contrast to the bog-stained "black water" that is characteristic of most lakes and ponds in the area. The three species depend upon the water quality of the lake which is being threatened by a rapidly growing seasonal tourist and resident population. The area is without a modern waste disposal system, and much of the domestic waste seeps into the lake. Run-off from fertilizer applied to gardens and lawns along the developed northern lake shore creates additional problems in the lake. Excavation of drainage canals for real estate development also jeopardizes these species by increasing siltation. Herbicides used for vegetation control in canals which drain into the lake have also severely depleted fish populations.

The Ouachita madtom, which is found in south-central Arkansas, is threatened by stream alteration projects and construction activities. One planned new community, in particular, would result in massive construction activities in the headwater tributaries of the Saline River drainage-- its prime breeding area. Any siltation of streams in this area would seriously threaten the species.

There are presently three known localities for the Barrens topminnow-- all in Coffee County, Tennessee, where it inhabits spring-fed creeks. The Barrens topminnow's limited habitat is threatened by various local alterations of springs and streams.

The Service is unaware of any present or potential conflicts which could arise if this proposal were adopted. Federal agencies are prohibited from authorizing, funding, or carrying out any action which would jeopardize endangered species or adversely affect their critical habitat.

Interested persons who wish to participate in this rulemaking should send their comments to the Director, Fish and Wildlife Service (OES), Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

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