

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

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SNAIL DARTER RECOVERY TEAM APPOINTED

A team of Federal, State, and university biologists has been appointed to come up with a plan which would bring the endangered snail darter population back to a healthy status, Assistant Secretary Robert L. Herbst announced today.

The team was established upon the recommendations of Herbst and David Freeman, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Tennessee Valley Authority, at their meeting on June 20 in Knoxville. The mission of the recovery team is to collect more information on the status and needs of the snail darter, and then draw up a comprehensive recovery plan which could include such recommendations as captive breeding, reestablishment in other suitable waters, and securing or improving the status of those populations currently located in the Little Tennessee River.

Recovery teams are appointed by the Fish and Wildlife Service to develop comprehensive plans to reverse species' decline. Recovery plans provide a means to combine varied programs of agencies and organizations into effective, efficient, and concentrated efforts which should ultimately lead to qualifying certain species for complete deregulation or reclassification from endangered to threatened status.

The team is under the leadership of Harold Hurst, Regional Manager, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. Other team members include Price Wilkins, fishery biologist, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency; Wayne Starns and David Etnier, ichthyologists both with the University of Tennessee; Richard Fitz and Gary Hickman, fishery biologists of the Tennessee Valley Authority; and Hallett Boles, fishery biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The snail darter, listed as endangered on October 9, 1975, is a 3-inch perch found in the main channel of the Little Tennessee River. Its habitat is characterized by clean gravel shoals in moderate to swift current.

The Service has established 62 recovery teams responsible for 79 listed taxa.

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