

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

For Release On Receipt (prepared 8/3/79)

Inez Connor 202/343-5634

## CRITICAL HABITAT REPROPOSED FOR THREE SOUTHEASTERN FISHES

Critical habitat has been proposed again in parts of Alabama and Tennessee for three tiny endangered fishes by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the July 27, 1979, Federal Register. The Interior agency also scheduled public meetings for late August near the areas that are considered essential for conserving the spring pygmy sunfish (Elassoma sp.), pygmy sculpin (Cottus pygmaeus), and the Barrens topminnow (Fundulus sp.).

The economic and other effects of designating critical habitat are expected to be insignificant in the foreseeable future and the Service is unaware of any present or potential conflicts that could arise if this reproposal were adopted. Two of the areas are privately owned and the third is owned by a municipal water company. So long as the species are not harmed, designating critical habitat has no effect on the owners or their activities on the land unless there is some Federal involvement. There is no known Federal involvement at this time. The Endangered Species Act requires Federal agencies to conserve endangered species and to consult with the Service to ensure that actions they authorize, fund, or carry out do not adversely affect a listed species or its critical habitat.

Critical habitat for the pygmy sculpin has been identified as the Coldwater Spring and about half a mile of Coldwater Creek where the spring empties. The spring and creek are located in Calhoun County, Alabama. Although Coldwater Spring is used as a water supply for the city of

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