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Conserving South Carolina's At-Risk Species:

Species facing threats to their survival

Little River crayfish (a.k.a. Broad River spiny crayfish) (*Cambarus spicatus*)



Little River crayfish/NC Wildlife Resources Commission

Description

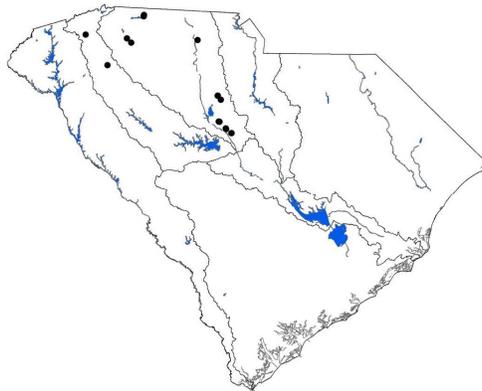
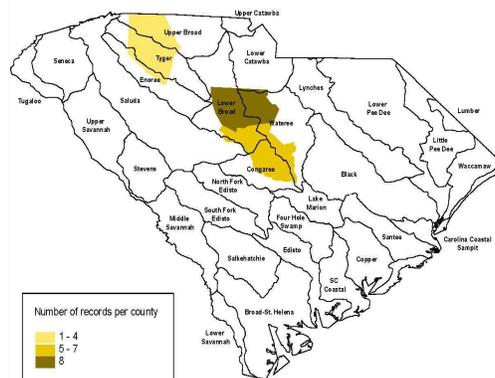
The Little River spiny crayfish, also known as the Broad River spiny crayfish, is gray-green with cream, pink, purple and brown highlights. The chelae (claws) are green with orange tips and a double row of tubercles (nodules). The rostrum (head section) has marginal spines, and the chelae are broad with long fingers. Specimens ranged from about 60 mm (2.4 inches) to 78 mm (3.1 inches) in length.

Range

The Little River crayfish is restricted to the Broad River basin. In South Carolina, it is found in Fairfield, Greenville, Pickens, Richland, Spartanburg, and York Counties. It has a more restricted distribution in North Carolina and is not very abundant at any one site.

Habitat

Found in streams of small to medium size, the Little River crayfish has been found in streams that exhibit signs of flash flooding which include sand deposits and log jams. This species is usually found in or beneath debris with trapped leaf litter, often from beneath undercut banks, woody debris piles and cobble along the stream bottom.



Watersheds and spatial distribution of Cambarus spicatus, A.G. Eversole, 2004 & 2014.

Status

NatureServe currently identifies this crayfish with a ranking of imperiled (S2) in North Carolina and vulnerable (S3) in South Carolina. While trends are not clear, this narrowly distributed crayfish may be declining. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was petitioned to list the species in April 2010 and published a sub-

stantial 90-day finding in September 2011 indicating listing may be warranted.

Threats

The Little River crayfish has an extremely restricted distribution and is not abundant, even when found. Since so little is known about the species, it is possible that there are potential threats to habitat that have not yet been fully realized.

Management/Protection Needs

Updated surveys are needed for the species. Monitor known populations to determine if they are in decline, stable or increasing. Research on the life history and habitat preferences of this species is also greatly needed as this information is currently lacking.

References

Eversole, Arnold G., *Identification and Distribution of Crayfishes in South Carolina: A South Carolina State Wildlife Grants Project - Final Report*. June 2014.

Eversole, Arnold G. and Jones, Danny R., *Key to the Crayfish of South Carolina*, Clemson University, Department of Forestry and Natural Resources. December 2004.

NatureServe. 2015. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 7.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available <http://explorer.natureserve.org>.

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources—State Wildlife Action Plan: 2010-2015.

Contact

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
South Carolina Field Office
843/727-4707
melanie_old@fws.gov