

Aquatic Habitats Supporting Federally Listed Endangered and Threatened Species and Proposed Species in West Virginia (Updated August 2012)

There are fourteen federally listed endangered and threatened species that are associated with specific aquatic habitats in West Virginia. These include ten endangered freshwater mussels - clubshell (*Pleurobema clava*), fanshell (*Cyprogenia stegaria*), James spinymussel (*Pleurobema collina*), northern riffleshell (*Epioblasma torulosa rangiana*), pink mucket pearlymussel (*Lampsilis abrupta*), rayed bean (*Villosa fabilis*), sheepnose (*Plethobasus cyphus*), snuffbox (*Epioblasma triquetra*), spectaclecase (*Cumberlandia monodonta*), and tubercled-blossom pearlymussel (*Epioblasma torulosa torulosa*); two endangered plants - Harperella (*Ptilimnium nodosum*) and northeastern bulrush (*Scirpus ancistrochaetus*); one threatened plant - Virginia spiraea (*Spiraea virginiana*); and one threatened crustacean - Madison Cave isopod (*Antrolana lira*). Additionally, the diamond darter (*Crystallaria cincotta*), a fish found only in the Elk River, is currently proposed for listing as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. If eventually listed, it will not affect the number of West Virginia waterways with federally listed species because its range overlaps with other currently listed species. Nine other listed species not associated with specific aquatic habitats also occur in West Virginia. Those species are not addressed here.

The aquatic habitats below, listed alphabetically within the two U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) regulatory districts that operate in West Virginia (Huntington and Pittsburgh districts), represent the most current information on the known and potential distribution of the federally listed species described above. Prior to conducting any activities that could result in adverse impacts to these aquatic habitats (e.g., projects that involve the placement of rock or other fill material into or adjacent to these habitats, the withdrawal or diversion of water, projects that could introduce sediment or toxic chemicals into waterways, or which could alter water temperature, streamside vegetation, etc.), please contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, West Virginia Field Office, at (304) 636-6586. To determine if a Corps permit is required for activities in or near these or other aquatic habitats in West Virginia, please contact the Huntington District at (304) 399-5710 or the Pittsburgh District at (412) 395-7152.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Huntington District

1. Big Sandy Creek: Kanawha County: Snuffbox.
2. Bluestone River: Mercer and Summers Counties (Bluestone Gorge to slackwater of Bluestone Reservoir): Virginia spiraea.
3. Cedar Creek: Braxton and Gilmer Counties: Snuffbox.
4. Cove Creek: Monroe County: James spinymussel.
5. Elk River: Braxton, Clay, and Kanawha Counties (Sutton Dam to slackwater below Coonskin Park), including the lower one-half mile reaches of its tributaries Birch River, Blue Creek, and Laurel Creek: Clubshell, pink mucket pearlymussel, northern riffleshell, rayed bean, and snuffbox. The Elk River also contains the diamond darter (proposed species).
6. Gauley River: Fayette and Nicholas Counties (Summersville Dam to Swiss): Virginia spiraea.
7. Greenbrier River: Greenbrier and Pocahontas Counties: Virginia spiraea.
8. Henry Fork: Calhoun and Roane Counties: Snuffbox.

9. Hughes River: Ritchie and Wirt Counties, including the lower one-half mile reach of its tributary Goose Creek: Snuffbox.
10. Kanawha River: Fayette, Kanawha, Mason, and Putnam Counties: Fanshell, pink mucket pearlymussel, sheepnose, spectaclecase, and tubercled-blossum pearlymussel.
11. Leading Creek: Gilmer and Lewis Counties, including the lower one-half mile reach of its tributary Fink Creek: Snuffbox.
12. Little Kanawha River: Braxton, Calhoun, Gilmer, Wirt, and Wood Counties, including the lower one-half mile reaches of its tributaries Leading Creek (Calhoun County., different stream than 5.d. above), Pine Creek, Sand Fork, Slate Creek, Straight Creek, Tanner Creek, Tucker Creek, and Walker Creek: Snuffbox.
13. Marsh Fork River including Dingess Branch and Millers Camp Branch and associated palustrine emergent and scrub-shrub wetlands: Raleigh County: Virginia spiraea.
14. McElroy Creek: Doddridge and Tyler Counties: Snuffbox.
15. Meadow River: Fayette, Greenbrier, and Nicholas Counties: Virginia spiraea.
16. Meathouse Fork of Middle Island Creek: Doddridge County, including the lower one-half mile reach of its tributary Toms Fork: Clubshell and snuffbox.
17. Middle Island Creek: Doddridge, Pleasants, and Tyler Counties, including the lower one-half mile reaches of its tributaries Arnold Creek, Bluestone Creek, Buckeye Creek, Indian Creek, McKim Creek, Point Pleasant Creek, and Sancho Creek: Clubshell, rayed bean, and snuffbox.
18. New River (Lower): Fayette County (Route 19 to Gauley Bridge): Virginia spiraea.
19. North Fork Hughes River: Ritchie and Wirt Counties, including the lower one-half mile reaches of its tributaries Addis Run, Bonds Creek, Devilhole Creek, and Gillespie Run: Snuffbox.
20. Ohio River: Cabell, Jackson, Mason Pleasants, Tyler, Wetzel, and Wood Counties: Fanshell, pink mucket pearlymussel, sheepnose, and snuffbox.
21. Potts Creek and South Fork of Potts Creek: Monroe County: James spiny mussel.
22. Reedy Creek: Roane and Wirt Counties: Snuffbox.
23. South Fork Hughes River: Doddridge, Ritchie, and Wirt Counties, including the lower one-half mile reaches of its tributaries Bone Creek, Indian Creek, Leatherbark Creek, Otterslide Creek, Slab Creek, and Spruce Creek: Clubshell and snuffbox.
24. Spring Creek: Roane and Wirt Counties: Snuffbox.
25. Steer Creek: Calhoun and Gilmer Counties: Snuffbox.
26. Sugar Creek: Pleasants County: Snuffbox.
27. West Fork Little Kanawha River: Calhoun, Roane, and Wirt Counties: Snuffbox.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Pittsburgh District

28. Back Creek: Berkeley County: Harperella.
29. Cacapon River: Morgan County: Harperella.
30. Dunkard Creek: Monongalia County: Snuffbox.
31. Fish Creek: Marshall County: Snuffbox.
32. Fishing Creek: Wetzel County: Snuffbox. Note – the mouth of Fishing Creek at the Ohio River is regulated by the Huntington District.
33. Hackers Creek (of the West Fork River): Harrison and Lewis Counties: Clubshell and snuffbox.
34. Potomac River: Morgan County (from the mouth of the Cacapon River to the mouth of Sleepy Creek): Harperella.
35. Sleepy Creek: Morgan County: Harperella.
36. West Fork River: Harrison, Lewis, and Marion Counties: Snuffbox.
37. Streams, springs, and wetlands connected to the groundwater system including caves, areas near sinkholes, and other groundwater/surface interfaces, from the Potomac River west to Opequon Creek, especially in the Rippon and Leetown Areas, and the Evitts Run Watershed: Jefferson and Berkeley Counties: Madison Cave isopod.
38. Wetlands: Berkeley and Hardy Counties: Northeastern bulrush.

Please note that although the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection has drafted guidance and a web-based tool for water withdrawal limits related to natural gas production and other development activities, the tool has not yet been validated as adequately protective of freshwater mussels or other aquatic species under all weather and precipitation conditions. The tool should be checked daily before withdrawing significant quantities of water from any watershed known to contain freshwater mussels. Users should exercise caution and use common sense, particularly during drought or extended dry conditions, or in cases where multiple users may be withdrawing water from the same source. If a stream is low and withdrawing additional water could expose portions of the stream bottom or banks that are normally submerged, including riffle areas downstream from pools from which water is typically withdrawn, users should find a different location or water source that does not contain federally listed species. Water users should not block, dam, or divert flows, or excavate pools or otherwise create unnatural deep spots in the aquatic habitats listed above or in their direct tributaries. Use of the tool does not absolve users of liability for the loss of aquatic life, including potential violation of the Endangered Species Act if take of federally listed species occurs.

Please also note that freshwater mussels which are not federally listed are protected and managed by the State of West Virginia, Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR). The guidelines above should also be followed when conducting activities that could impact any West Virginia waterways that may support any freshwater mussels. If in doubt as to whether conditions are suitable for withdrawing water, either select another more appropriate location or contact the WVDNR at (304) 637-0245.