

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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SELDOM SEEN CRUSTACEANS SELECTED FOR STUDY

Fifty-seven species of freshwater crustaceans, including shrimp, scud, and crayfish, will be studied by the Federal Government, 24 States, and the District of Columbia to determine if any of them should be added to the endangered or threatened species list. A notice of the study appeared recently in the Federal Register.

The National Speleological Society of Washington, D.C., affiliated with the American Association for the Advancement of Science, petitioned the Department of the Interior to review the status of these crustaceans, most of which are found in caves or springs. The crustaceans are an integral part of their ecosystems and in several instances they are the primary food of threatened or endangered fish such as pupfish which share the same habitat. Two of the 57 species are threatened by the construction of dams, but for most of the species being studied ground-water pollution is the greatest problem. Other habitat losses can be attributed to lowered water tables, development, flooding, and strip mining.

The spiny cave scud, for example, is common only to the Greenbriar Valley, a tributary of the New River in West Virginia. Strip mining is the greatest threat to this shrimp-like animal. It is estimated that 90 percent of the State's freshwater mussels have been lost because of strip mining and other environmental disturbances.

In Texas, the Pecos scud is also in trouble. This scud, which can have either reddish or greenish bands, is found only in Willbanks Spring northwest of Fort Stockton. It formerly lived in many other areas along the Pecos River system, but the pumping of subsurface water, particularly in New Mexico, wiped out those populations. Currently the isolated habitat of this scud is threatened by oil drilling, a lowered water table and by pollution.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 directs the Department of the Interior, through the Fish and Wildlife Service, to review the status of those species which scientific evidence indicates are "threatened" or "endangered." The notice of review published in the Federal Register affects the District of Columbia and the following 24 States: Oregon, California, Arizona, New Mexico, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin, Illinois, Mississippi, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Ohio, Florida, West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, and Connecticut. The Governors of the States and the Mayor of the District of Columbia have been notified of this review. All interested parties are requested to submit any factual information which is germane to this review to the Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.