

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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## INTERIOR PLACES SNAIL DARTER ON ENDANGERED LIST

A small, three-inch long species of fish discovered in Tennessee last summer will be given endangered status, Keith M. Schreiner, Associate Director of Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, announced today.

The snail darter, Percina (Imostoma) sp., discovered last summer by a biologist, occupies a 12-mile stretch of the Little Tennessee River in Loudon County, Tennessee. The fish inhabits only portions of clean, gravel shoals with cool, swift, low-turbidity water. The food of the snail darter is almost exclusively snails which are abundant on these shoals and also require clean gravel substrate for their survival.

One consideration used to determine endangered status is the present or threatened destruction or modification of the habitat or range of a species.

The Fish and Wildlife Service has determined that impoundment of water behind the Tennessee Valley Authority's proposed Tellico Dam would result in the total destruction of the snail darter's present known habitat. The dam project, underway for about 8 years, is approximately 40 percent completed. The Fish and Wildlife Service has announced it will cooperate in every proper way to find ways of mitigating or avoiding the habitat damage.

The fish will be placed on the endangered species list effective November 9, 1975.

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