

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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THREE TEXAS FISHES PROPOSED FOR ENDANGERED OR THREATENED STATUS

Three Texas fishes--the Leon Springs pupfish, the Goodenough gambusia, and the Devil's River minnow--have been proposed for the endangered or threatened species lists by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The action, published in the August 14, 1978, Federal Register, proposes to list the Leon Springs pupfish (Cyprinodon bovinus) and the Goodenough gambusia (Gambusia amistadensis) as endangered and the Devil's River minnow (Dionda diaboli) as threatened. The action also proposes critical habitat for the Leon Springs pupfish and the Devil's River minnow.

"Endangered" means that a species is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. "Threatened" means that a species may become endangered within the foreseeable future.

The major cause for the decline of the three species is man's alteration of their habitats. Some populations of the Leon Springs pupfish died out when removal of ground water reduced stream flows, drying up the fish's habitat in Leon Springs and the upper portion of Leon Creek in Pecos County, Texas. Remaining populations in Diamond Y Spring are also threatened by reduced stream flows. The Leon Springs pupfish is also threatened by hybridization with a closely related pupfish, the sheepshead minnow, which was introduced accidentally, possibly while being used for bait. Scientists are now trying to eliminate the introduced pupfish and the hybrids. Pure stock of the Leon Springs pupfish is being kept at the Fish and Wildlife Service's Dexter National Fish Hatchery in New Mexico.

The Goodenough gambusia's only known habitat, Goodenough Spring, was destroyed in 1968 when it was flooded by the backwaters of the Corps of Engineers' Amistad Reservoir. The gambusia now survives only in captivity at the University of Texas and Dexter National Fish Hatchery.

Backwaters of the reservoir also destroyed the population of the Devil's River minnow and its habitat in the lower portion of Devil's River. The population in the river's headwaters was wiped out by decreased stream flows caused by removal of ground water, and remaining populations in the Devil's River are also threatened by reduced stream flows. The remaining habitats of the minnow, San Felipe Creek and Las Moras Creek, are threatened by the spread of nearby urban areas.

Interested persons wishing to comment on this proposal should write to the Director (OES), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240, by November 12, 1978.