

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Availability of a Draft Revised Recovery Plan for Higgins' Eye Pearly Mussel, *Lampsilis higginsii*, for Review and Comment

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of document availability.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announces availability for public review of a technical/agency draft revised recovery plan for the endangered Higgins' eye pearly mussel, *Lampsilis higginsii*. This freshwater mussel is known to presently occur in the Mississippi River from Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota, to approximately the Iowa-Missouri border, near Keokuk, Iowa, with populations also occurring in the Wisconsin River, downstream of Prairie du Sac, Wisconsin; St. Croix River downstream of Taylors Falls, Minnesota-St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin; and Rock River below Steel Dam, at Milan, Illinois, all tributaries to the Mississippi River. The Service solicits review and comments from the public on this draft plan.

DATES: Comments on the draft recovery plan must be received on or before August 21, 1998 to receive consideration by the Service.

ADDRESSES: Persons wishing to review the draft recovery plan may obtain a copy by contacting the Field Supervisor, Twin Cities Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4101 East 80th Street, Bloomington, Minnesota 55125-1665 (telephone 612/725-3548). Written comments and materials regarding the plan should be addressed to the Field Supervisor at the above address. Comments and materials received will be available, by appointment, for public inspection during normal business hours, at the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Gerry Bade, Rock Island Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4469 48th Avenue Court, Rock Island, Illinois 61201 (telephone 309/793-5800, ext. 520), or contact Mr. Chuck Kjos, Twin Cities Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4101 East 80th Street, Bloomington, Minnesota 55425-1665 (telephone 612/725-3548, ext. 206).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Background**

Restoring an endangered or threatened animal or plant to the point where it is again a secure, self-sustaining member of its ecosystem is a primary goal of the Service's

endangered species program. To help guide the recovery effort, the Service is working to prepare recovery plans for most of the federally threatened and endangered species native to the United States. Recovery plans describe actions considered necessary for conservation of the species, establish criteria for the recovery levels for upgrading and recovering them, and estimate time and cost for implementing the recovery measures needed.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act), as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), requires the development of recovery plans for listed species unless such a plan would not promote the conservation of a particular species. Section 4(f) of the Act, as amended in 1988, requires public notice and opportunity for public review and comment be provided during recovery plan development. The Service will consider all information presented during a public comment period prior to approval of each new or revised recovery plan. The Service and other Federal agencies will also take these comments into account in the course of implementing approved recovery plans.

The document under review revises the original Higgins' eye pearly mussel recovery plan, which was approved by the Service in 1983. Since 1983, additional information on the abundance, distribution, biology, and threats to the species has been developed—for example, the species is known today to be somewhat more widespread than was known in 1983 and zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*), believed today to be a serious threat to Higgins' eye pearly mussel, did not invade U.S. waters until the late 1980s. Endangered species recovery planning today incorporates population concepts and genetic considerations to a greater and more developed degree than it did in 1983 and statistical methods for analysis of mussel populations have advanced significantly since that date. Much recovery work recommended in the 1983 recovery plan remains valid and needs to continue, but the recovery plan needs revision to reflect current knowledge and information of the species' present abundance, distribution, and welfare, as well as actions currently needed for its recovery. The draft revised recovery plan updates information on Higgins' eye pearly mussel abundance, distribution, threats, recommended recovery actions, and recommended criteria for reclassification to threatened status and delisting.

Higgins' eye pearly mussel is known to presently occur in the Mississippi

River from Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota, to approximately the Iowa-Missouri border, near Keokuk, Iowa, with populations also occurring in the St. Croix River downstream of Taylors Falls, Minnesota-St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin; Wisconsin River downstream of Prairie de Sac, Wisconsin; and Rock River below Steel Dam, at Milan, Illinois, all tributaries to the Mississippi River. Water quality, navigation, past and present habitat alteration, zebra mussels, incidental loss via legal and illegal harvest of commercial mussel species, natural predation, and loss of genetic variability are addressed in the recovery plan. Recovery efforts will concentrate on protecting the habitat of areas known to support viable Higgins' eye pearly mussel populations and on addressing individually the above identified threats.

Public Comments Solicited

The Service solicits written comments on the recovery plan described. All comments received by the date specified will be considered prior to approval of the plan. Comments should be sent to the Field Supervisor, Twin Cities Field Office, at the above address.

Authority

The authority for this action is Section 4(f) of the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1533(f).

Dated: June 15, 1998.

John A. Blankenship,

Assistant Regional Director, IL, IN, MO (Ecological Services), Region 3, Fort Snelling, Minnesota.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Geological Survey

Request for Public Comments on Information Collection Submitted to the Office of Management and Budget for Review Under the Paperwork Reduction Act

A request extending the collection of information listed below has been submitted to the Office of Management and Budget for approval under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35). Copies of the proposed collection of information and related forms may be obtained by contacting the Bureau's Clearance Officer at the phone number listed below. OMB has up to 60 days to approve or disapprove the information collection but may respond after 30