

**American Malacological Society (AMS) Conservation Committee Imperiled Species News  
May 2016**

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Under normal circumstances, I would not submit this periodic imperiled species report when there is nothing to report. There has been no activity with respect to USFWS nor NMFS federal legislation with respect to mollusks thus far in 2016. In 2015 no species were proposed, removed, modified, or reviewed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service nor NMFS. Four species of Micronesian tree snails were added to the list as Endangered; fragile tree snail (*Samoana fragilis*), Guan tree snail (*Partula gibba*), and Langford's tree snail (*Partula langfordi*). Critical Habitat was designated for the Neosho mussel (*Lampsilis rafinesqueana*) and rabbitsfoot (*Quadrula cylindrica cylindrica*). This report is instead issued in response to a logistical change proposed to the Endangered and Threatened Species listing process.

Anyone who has ever gone through the process of attempting to list a species, mollusk or otherwise, as Endangered knows how difficult it can be.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service just revised their regulations governing the petitioning process for the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Proposed changes were initiated following years of data gathering and feedback from prior petitions and are intended to make the petitioning process easier and improve overall quality of submitted petitions. Specifically, the new revisions introduce the following changes:

(1) Improved engagement by state wildlife agencies:

petitioners are now required to send notification letters to each state wildlife agency in which the species occurs 30 days prior to submittal. The original proposal requirements for petitioners to solicit information from state wildlife agencies prior to submittal for inclusion on proposals have been removed.

(2) Improved quality of petitions:

The original requirement that petitioners certify that gathered all relevant information on petitioned species has been removed.

(3) Clarification of number of species per petition:

Petitions are no limited to all or a portion of only one species and this applies to "taxonomic Species" only. For vertebrate species, this includes one or more distinct population segments (DPS).

(4) Paperwork reduction requirement:

A Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) control number will now be required for ESA petition regulations. Comments on PRA burden estimates are being solicited.

A complete description of the proposed regulation changes can be found at <http://www.fws.gov/policy/library/2016/2016-09200.pdf>. Public comments will be accepted until May 23, 2016. Comments can be made online through the Federal ERulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov> but the docket number for the proposed rule (FWS-HQ-2015-0016) must be included.

As always, I will continue to stay up to date on proposals, rules, and changes to the U.S. ESA with respect to mollusk conservation as they happen including deadlines for submitting comments or questions so that they might be offered in a timely fashion.

Thanks, as always.

Jay Cordeiro  
Northeast Natural History & Supply  
Contact: [jay.cordeiro@umb.edu](mailto:jay.cordeiro@umb.edu)