

Peer Review of Scientific Information

Proposed Designation of Critical Habitat for the Vermilion Darter

About the Document

Title: Proposed Designation of Critical Habitat for the Vermilion Darter (*Etheostoma chermocki*)

Summary: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing to designate critical habitat for the vermilion darter (*Etheostoma chermocki*) under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. A total of 21.16 kilometers (13.15 stream miles) in 1 unit (5 segments) is proposed for critical habitat designation. The proposed critical habitat is located within the Turkey Creek watershed in Jefferson County, Alabama.

Type of Review: Influential

Timeline of the Peer Review (Estimated Dates):

Draft document disseminated: December 2009

Peer review initiated: February 2010

Peer review completed by: February 2010

Date Document will be finalized: December 2010

About the Peer Review Process: The Service will solicit written comments from three independent scientific reviewers. Formal request for peer review will be made by individual letters to experts affiliated with the University of Alabama, Samford University, and Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries. Reviewers will be selected by the Service for their recognized expertise in this species and its habitat. This review will occur concurrently with the public comment period for the proposed action. The public comment period is anticipated to be open sometime in December of 2009. The Service will use the information received from the peer review, as appropriate, to develop the final designation of critical habitat for the vermilion darter.

About Public Participation: Public comments on the proposed critical habitat designation will be sought with a Federal Register announcement expected in December of 2009 and the distribution by mail and press release of this announcement to interested parties. This comment period will end 60 days from the date it publishes in the Federal Register. This peer review plan is made available on this website to allow the public to comment and monitor our compliance with the Office of Management and Budget's "Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review."

Contact:

Daniel Drennen, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mississippi Field Office, 6578 Dogwood View Parkway, Jackson, Mississippi, 39213; telephone: 601-321-1127; facsimile: 601-965-4340.