

Bliss Rapids Snail 5-Year Review

Questions and Answers

July 2004

Q. What action is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service taking and why?

The Service is conducting a 5-year review of the Bliss Rapids snail (*Taylorconcha serpenticola*). Under the Endangered Species Act, the Service is required to conduct a review of listed species at least once every 5 years. The purpose of a 5-year review is to ensure that listed species have the appropriate level of protection under the Endangered Species Act. The 5-year review process will evaluate population data, factors affecting the species, and ongoing conservation measures. During the review process, the Bliss rapids snail will continue to receive full protection under the Act.

Q. When was the Bliss rapids snail listed, and why?

The Bliss Rapids snail was listed as threatened on December 14, 1992. The final rule indicated that the free-flowing, cool-water environments required by the snail were impacted by and are vulnerable to continued adverse habitat modifications and deteriorating water quality from one or more of the following: hydroelectric development, peak-loading effects from existing hydroelectric project operations, water pollution, competition with non-native species, and inadequate regulatory mechanisms.

Q. What could happen as a result of this review?

The Service could find that no change in the snail's status is warranted. However, if new information shows that the classification of Bliss Rapids snail is warranted, the agency may propose new rules that could do one of the following:

- a. Reclassify the species from threatened to endangered; or
- b. Delist the species

Q. What if the Service proposes a change to the snail's status?

If the agency does propose a change, a formal rule-making process would begin, including public review and comment. No change in status would occur until the completion of that process.

Q. Where is the snail currently found?

It occurs in isolated colonies in of the Idaho's Middle Snake River, as well as in several cold-water springs in Idaho's Hagerman Valley.

Q. What information will be considered for the 5-year review?

With this review, the Service will consider all the information that has become available since the species' original listing. Information may include, but is not limited to:

- a. Species biology including, population trends, distribution, abundance, demographics, and genetics;
- b. Habitat conditions including, but not limited to, amount, distribution, and suitability;
- c. Conservation measures that have been implemented that benefit the species;
- d. Threat status and trends;
- e. Other new information, data, or corrections including, but not limited to, taxonomic or nomenclature changes, identification of erroneous information contained in the list, and improved analytical methods.

The Service is especially interested in new information, analyses, and/or reports that summarize and interpret the following: demographic and population trends; genetics and competition; habitat amount, use and distribution; and adequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms, management, and conservation planning; advances in analysis that, when applied to the original listing data, provide a different interpretation or conclusion will be considered new information.

We request this information for all applicable land ownerships with the range of the species.

Submissions should be supported by documentation such as maps, bibliographic references, methods used to gather and analyze data, and/or copies of any pertinent publications, reports, or letters by knowledgeable sources. All information that is submitted will be considered. We prefer, however, data that has been reported, published, and/or peer reviewed. Raw data that has not been substantiated, analyzed, summarized, and/or peer reviewed may be discounted in this review process.

Q. After assessing this information, what will the Service do?

Once the Service gathers information regarding the Bliss Rapids snail, the agency will be able to tell:

- a. Whether new information suggests that the species' populations are increasing, declining, or stable;
- b. Whether existing factors affecting the species are increasing, the same, reduced or eliminated;
- c. If there are any additional factors affecting the species;
- d. Whether there are conservation actions affecting the species; and
- e. If new information or analysis calls into question any conclusions in the original listing determination.

Q. What if no new information is submitted for the species under review?

A. If no new information is submitted during the 5-year review comment period, no changes will be made to the classification. However, reviews of listed species are not limited to this process. We may review the status of a species at any time, based on new scientific information, and may initiate reclassification or delisting whenever the best available science and commercial information indicates that such action is warranted.

Q. What is not be considered "new" information?

- A. The Service will not consider the following as new information:
- a. Submissions that merely state or advocates a change in species classification;
 - b. Submissions regarding impacts to the economy or other impacts of a listing

designation;

c. Analyses that were considered at the time of listing and were rejected on the basis of considerations that remain unchanged.

Q. How do I submit information to be considered in the review?

A. Information and comments may be submitted in writing to: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Snake River Fish and Wildlife Office, 1387 S. Vinnell Way, Room 368, Boise, Idaho 83709. Comments may also be faxed to 208-378-5262, or e-mailed to fw1srbocomment@fws.gov. Please include "BRS 5-Yr Review" in the title line for faxes and e-mails. Please submit electronic comments in an ASCII file format, and avoid the use of special characters and encryption. If our Internet connection is disrupted, please submit your comments by mail or fax from the contact office above.

Q. When should information be submitted?

A. In order to allow the Service adequate time to consider information as we conduct this review, we must receive information submissions no later than September 24, 2004.

Q. Will submissions be available to the public after the review?

A. Information received in response to this notice, and review results, will be available for public inspection by appointment during normal business hours at the above Service address.

Q. Who should I contact for more information about the Bliss Rapids snail?

A. The contact for the Bliss Rapids 5-year review is Steve Lysne, or Jeri Wood, USFWS, 1387 S. Vinnell Way, Boise, Idaho 83709, 208-378-5243, fax 208-378-5262.