

Two Missouri crayfish species may be listed as 'threatened' under Endangered Species Act

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Cambaridae: *Procambarus alleni*. Credit: Thomas Seip/Wikipedia

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed listing two kinds of Missouri crayfish as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, as well as identifying "critical habitat" for their survival and recovery in the state's southeast watersheds.

Both the Big Creek crayfish and the St. Francis River crayfish have seen their numbers contract since the introduction of nonnative woodland crayfish in the 1980s. While the invasive crayfish is seen as the "primary threat" to the [native species](#), the agency said in its listing last week that they also contend with water quality issues, including those tied to the legacy of lead mining operations in their Ozark region habitat range.

Streams occupied by the lobster-like species include upstream portions of the St. Francis River, and tributaries in Washington and St. Francois counties.

The USFWS proposal would include a special rule to allow for unintentional capture of the crayfish under certain conditions. The proposed [critical habitat](#) designation would only impose new requirements in areas with federal funding, permits or approvals.

The proposal appeared Thursday in the Federal Register and is now subject to a 60-day public comment period.

Last year, Missouri granted protection to two other crayfish species that it considers endangered.

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