

Suwannee Alligator Snapping Turtle/Endangered Species Act: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Final Rule Designated Threatened Species



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The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (“Service”) published a June 27th Federal Register Notice under the Endangered Species Act (“ESA”) designating threatened species status for the Suwannee Alligator Snapping Turtle. See 89 Fed. Reg. 53507.

The final rule adds this turtle to the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife under the ESA.

The ESA provides that a species warrants listing if it meets the definition of an endangered species (in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range) or a threatened species (likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range).

In the event that such a determination is made that a species warrants listing, the Service must list the species promptly and designate its critical habitat to the maximum extent prudent and determinable.

The Service determined that the Suwannee Alligator Snapping Turtle meets the ESA’s definition of a threatened species. As a result, the turtle is being listed as threatened.

The five factors for determining whether a species is an endangered or threatened species include any one of the following:

- Factor A: The present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range;
- Factor B: Overutilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes;
- Factor C: Disease or predation;
- Factor D: Inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms; or
- Factor E: Other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence.

The Service determined that the primary threats to this turtle include:

- Factor B: Illegal harvesting and collection
- Factor C: Nest predation
- Factor E: Hook ingestion and entanglement due to bycatch associated with freshwater fishing

The range of this alligator snapping turtle includes the Suwannee River Basin in Florida and Georgia.

A copy of the Federal Register Notice can be downloaded [here](#).