

Sixteen Northwest Georgia Aquatic Species Effects Determination Guidance for Endangered & Threatened Species (EDGES)

Bartow, Catoosa, Cherokee Gilmer, Cobb, Dawson, Forsyth, Floyd, Gordon, Haralson, Lumpkin Murray, Paulding, Whitfield Counties

Species Covered by This EDGE:

- **Endangered:** Conasauga logperch (*Percina jenkinsi*), Etowah darter (*Etheostoma etowahae*), amber darter (*Percina antesella*), Georgia pigtoe (*Pleurobema hanleyianum*), interrupted rocksnail (*Leptoxis formani*), Coosa moccasinshell (*Medionidus parvulus*), Southern clubshell (*Pleurobema decisim*), Southern pigtoe (*Pleurobema georgianum*), and triangular kidneyshell (*Ptychobranchus greenii*).
- **Threatened:** Cherokee darter (*Etheostoma scotti*), blue shiner (*Cyprinella caerulea*), goldline darter (*Percina aurolineata*), snail darter (*Percina tanasi*), trispot darter (*Etheostoma trisella*), frecklebelly madtom (*Noturus munitis*), fine-lined pocketbook (*Hamiota altilis*), and Alabama moccasinshell (*Medionidus acutissimus*).

These 16 species occur in South Chickamauga Creek, the Tallapoosa River system, and/or the four headwater rivers that form the Upper Coosa River system (the Conasauga, Coosawattee, Etowah, and Oostanaula). All require flowing water, stable stream channels with minimal sediment and algae growth, and adequate water quality to forage and reproduce. In addition, the listed ACT mussels require a specific host fish to reproduce – their larva, called glochidia, are released directly into the water and must find and attach to the gills or fins of an appropriate host fish to complete development.

Primary threats include increased impervious surface and stormwater runoff, increased turbidity and sedimentation, contaminants and hormones, loss of riparian buffers, reservoirs/culverts/dams that block movement up- and downstream, and reservoirs and water withdrawals that change hydrology.

Critical Habitat for these species occurs in the Conasauga, Coosawattee, and Oostanaula Rivers from the GA/TN border downstream to Rome, GA; in the Conasauga tributary, Holly Creek; and in the Tallapoosa River to the GA/AL border.



Etowah darter (above) and fine-lined pocket book (below) displaying “lure” to attract host fish. The female discharges larvae that lodge in a host fish’s gills or fins to mature.



Endangered Species Act Consultation Checklist:

Applicant:

1. Does IPAC indicate federally-listed aquatic species may occur in the project area.
 - a. No.....No effect. Provide IPaC information to the Savannah District with application/PCN.
 - b. Yes.....Go to #2.
2. Has the Fish and Wildlife Service’s Georgia Ecological Services Field Office (GA ES) already reviewed and provided comments on the project.
 - a. No.....Go to #3.
 - b. Yes.....Provide GAES project review documentation to the Savannah District with application/PCN.
3. Were Determination key(s) completed in IPaC and a consistency letter auto-generated for the project.
 - a. No..... Provide completed EDGES Applicant Consultation Form and supporting documentation to the Savannah District with 404 application/PCN.
 - b. Yes.....Provide IPaC determination key and consistency letter to the Savannah District with application/PCN.

Savannah District:

4. Does IPaC indicate Federally-listed aquatic species or designated Critical Habitat may occur in the project area.
 - a. No..... No effect.
 - b. Yes.....Go to #5.

5. Has GA ES reviewed the project and provided information that Federally-listed aquatic species will not be impacted by the project or has the Savannah district determined that the project will have ‘no effect’ on listed aquatic species.
 - a. No..... Go to #6.
 - b. Yes.....No effect.

6. Has the applicant provided a consistency letter from IPaC indicating the project will have ‘no effect’ on federally listed aquatic species or is ‘not likely to adversely affect’ federally listed species.
 - a. No..... Go to #7.
 - b. Yes.....Verify that the applicant has completed the IPaC determination key properly. No concurrence from GA ES is required. Section 7 consultation complete.

7. Has the Savannah district completed the required determination key in IPaC and generated a concurrence letter.
 - a. No..... Go to #8.
 - b. Yes..... No concurrence from GA ES required. Section 7 consultation complete.

8. Will this project require an Individual 404 Clean Water Act Permit, involve point source discharges, or result in new surface water withdrawals?
 - a. No..... Go to #9.
 - b. Yes..... Go to #15.

9. Is potentially suitable habitat present in the project area or within 1 mile downstream of the project area? Suitable habitat information may be found by species at: <https://georgiabiodiversity.org/portal/table/aquatics/>
 - a. No..... NLAA. No concurrence from GA ES required. Section 7 consultation complete.
 - b. Yes..... Go to #10.

10. Is the project assuming presence of federally-listed aquatics in the project area?
 - a. No..... Go to #11.
 - b. Yes..... Go to #13.

11. Has a survey been conducted to determine if federally-listed aquatics occur in the project area?
 - a. No..... Go to #13.
 - b. Yes..... Go to #12.

12. Were any federally-listed aquatics found during the aquatics survey?
 - a. No..... NLAA. No concurrence from GA ES required. Section 7 consultation complete.
 - b. Yes..... Go to #13.

13. Will the project include activities that require stream impacts in perennial or intermittent streams?
 - a. No..... Go to #14.
 - b. Yes..... Go to #15.

14. Will the project comply with the minimization measures for aquatic species on the following page?
 - a. No..... Go to #15.
 - b. Yes..... NLAA. No concurrence from GA ES required. Section 7 consultation complete.

15. Adequate information is provided in the application to assist the Savannah District and GA ES in consultation?
 - a. No.....Request the information and, once received, continue with 15b.
 - b. Yes.....Share data with GA ES and continue consultation. Go to #15.

16. If consultation results in a Savannah district determination of:
 - a. NLAA.....Concurrence letter from GA ES required. Section 7 consultation complete
 - b. LAA.....Initiate formal consultation.

Information to be provided to the Savannah District for Endangered Species Act Review

All should be included with application (where applicable):

- Sediment and erosion control plan, showing all stream buffers, including widths.
- A post-construction stormwater management plan.
- A timeline documenting when land clearing, construction, and post-construction actions will be implemented.
- Location of new or improved culverts, bridges, dams, stormwater facilities, and utility crossings of streams.
- Acreage estimates of disturbed land, undisturbed land, and impervious surface post-construction.

Minimization Measures for Aquatic Species

All should be incorporated into project (where applicable):

- Compliance with Georgia's Erosion and Sedimentation Control Act.
- Compliance with the relevant performance standards in the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual.
- Stream buffer protection consistent with the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District model stream buffer ordinance.