



I demand that agencies protect the Eastern hellbender as either threatened or endangered

The Eastern hellbender, our country's largest salamander species, continues to see large-scale declines in habitat and populations in much of its original range, which includes the mid-Atlantic to the Midwestern states as well as southeastern corner of the country.

Even in areas where it still can be found in pockets, such as the Susquehanna River basin in northcentral Pennsylvania, experts suggest 95 percent of its habitat is gone.

The hellbender requires clean water. It breathes directly through its skin, wrinkles on its sides increase surface area allowing it to be extremely efficient at absorbing oxygen, but also pollutants. This unfortunately means the species can not survive in impaired waterways yet makes it a vitally important clean water indicator species.

It also requires large flat rock structures on the bottom of streams to survive and excessive erosion and sedimentation issues are impacting the species, especially in areas where industrial impacts are increasing.

Despite all this, the US Fish and Wildlife Service decided in 2019 to not give the species any protections under the Endangered Species Act. Several groups fought that and in the fall of 2023, a federal judge overturned their 2019 decision.

The agency will be making a new decision by the end of 2024 and we are hoping to raise public awareness and response through this petition.

My name: _____

My hometown (town, state, country): _____

My email address (if owned): _____

Today's date: _____

My signature: _____

Mail the completed form to:

Middle Susquehanna
Riverkeeper Association

112 Market Street

Sunbury, PA 17801