

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE SPECIES ASSESSMENT AND LISTING PRIORITY ASSIGNMENT FORM

Scientific Name:

Stygobromus kenki

Common Name:

Kenk's amphipod

Lead region:

Region 5 (Northeast Region)

Information current as of:

05/07/2013

Status/Action

Funding provided for a proposed rule. Assessment not updated.

Species Assessment - determined species did not meet the definition of the endangered or threatened under the Act and, therefore, was not elevated to the Candidate status.

New Candidate

Continuing Candidate

Candidate Removal

Taxon is more abundant or widespread than previously believed or not subject to the degree of threats sufficient to warrant issuance of a proposed listing or continuance of candidate status

Taxon not subject to the degree of threats sufficient to warrant issuance of a proposed listing or continuance of candidate status due, in part or totally, to conservation efforts that remove or reduce the threats to the species

Range is no longer a U.S. territory

Insufficient information exists on biological vulnerability and threats to support listing

Taxon mistakenly included in past notice of review

Taxon does not meet the definition of "species"

Taxon believed to be extinct

Conservation efforts have removed or reduced threats

___ More abundant than believed, diminished threats, or threats eliminated.

Petition Information

Non-Petitioned

___ Petitioned

90-Day Positive:

12 Month Positive:

Did the Petition request a reclassification?

For Petitioned Candidate species:

Is the listing warranted(if yes, see summary threats below)

To Date, has publication of the proposal to list been precluded by other higher priority listing?

Explanation of why precluded:

Historical States/Territories/Countries of Occurrence:

- **States/US Territories:** District of Columbia, Maryland
- **US Counties:** Montgomery, MD
- **Countries:**Country information not available

Current States/Counties/Territories/Countries of Occurrence:

- **States/US Territories:** District of Columbia, Maryland
- **US Counties:** Montgomery, MD
- **Countries:**Country information not available

Land Ownership:

Sixty percent Federal (National Park Service (NPS)-Rock Creek Park), 20 percent County (Montgomery County, Maryland), and 20 percent private. The sites known to support the species consist of five small seeps/springs and their outflows; the five sites together have a total surface water area of less than 1 acre. The acreage needed to protect the recharge areas of these springs is not known but, based on recharge area information from other sites, is likely much greater.

Lead Region Contact:

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Lead Field Office Contact:

CHESAPEAKE BAY ESFO, Andy Moser, 410-573-4537, andy_moser@fws.gov

Biological Information

Species Description:

Kenks amphipod (*Stygobromus kenki*) was first collected in 1967 by Roman Kenk from a spring in Rock Creek Park, southeast of North National Capitol Parks headquarters in Washington, D.C. It was formally described by J.R. Holsinger (1978, pp.3942). This is a moderately small ground water species, with largest male specimens reaching 3.7 mm (0.15 inches (in)) and largest females 5.5 mm (0.22 in).

Taxonomy:

This amphipod is a member of the Spinopus Group of *Stygobromus* that includes two other closely related species, *S. spinosus* and *S. pseudospinosus*, which are found only in Virginia and primarily in Shenandoah National Park. Kenks amphipod is distinguished from those two species on the basis of various morphological features (Holsinger 1978, p. 39). These include the palmar (of or pertaining to the hand) margin of gnathopod 1 (pincer-like appendage), which is nearly straight, and the rudimentary ramus (branch) of uropod 3 (posterior (at or towards the rear) appendage), which is only about 1/8 length of the peduncle (a stalk supporting an animal organ, such as the eyestalk of a lobster). It is further distinguished from *S. spinosus* by less spinose (spiny) uropods of the male and shorter telson (posterior projection of the last body section) spines of both sexes. It is further distinguished from *S. pseudospinosus* by the telson, which is proportionately shorter and more spinose (Holsinger 1978, p. 39).

Accurate identification of Kenks amphipod can occur only when a specimen is removed from the spring site, preserved in a pickling agent for shipping, and sent to the species expert who removes legs and other appendages from the specimen for microscopic identification. This identification method is the best scientific method available. However, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and scientific community prefer not to use this method very often due to the resulting mortality.

We have carefully reviewed the available taxonomic information to reach the conclusion that Kenks amphipod is a valid species.

Habitat/Life History:

Amphipods of the genus *Stygobromus* occur in ground water or ground water-related habitats (e.g., caves, seeps, small springs, wells, interstices, and rarely deep lakes) and have modified morphology for survival in these subterranean habitats. They are generally eyeless and unpigmented (without color), and frequently have attenuated (reduced in length and width) bodies (Holsinger 1978, pp. 12). Members of this genus occur only in freshwater and belong to the family Crangonyctidae, the largest family of freshwater amphipods in North America. Kenks amphipod occurs in seepage springs in wooded areas (Holsinger 1978, p. 39). Seepage springs typically have a diffuse discharge of water where the flow cannot be immediately observed but the land surface is wet compared to the surrounding area (Culver et al 2012, p. 2). The shading, hydrologic conditions, and organic matter found in these woodlands are probably factors in maintaining suitable habitat for the species. Kenks amphipod can be found in dead leaves or fine sediment submerged in the waters of its seepage spring outflows (Holsinger 1978, p. 130). Seepage springs typically have a drainage area of less than 1 hectare and differ from other small surface waters in having higher conductivity and dissolved oxygen and lower pH and temperature (Culver *et al.* 2012, pp. 56).

Historical Range/Distribution:

All current and historical occurrences of Kenks amphipod are from the Potomac River watershed in or near Washington, D.C. At the time of its description, this amphipod was known from two seepage springs in Rock Creek Park in Washington, D.C. and was tentatively identified from one shallow well in Fairfax County in

northern Virginia (Holsinger 1978, p. 39). However, the single immature male specimen from this well was reexamined by a taxonomic expert and determined not to be *Stygobromus kenki* (Holsinger 2009, p. 266).

Current Range Distribution:

The species is currently only known from five seepage spring sites in the District of Columbia and Montgomery County, Maryland (Culver and Sereg 2004; Feller 2005). These are the only known sites for the Kenks amphipod despite extensive surveys for the species in the District of Columbia and Montgomery County, Maryland (Feller 1997; Culver and Sereg 2004; Feller 2005). Ground water amphipod surveys on NPS properties in Arlington and Fairfax Counties, Virginia, also failed to detect this species (Hutchins and Culver 2008).

Four of the known occupied sites are within the Rock Creek drainage; three within Rock Creek Park in Washington, D.C. (Kennedy Street Spring, East Spring, and Sherrill Drive Spring); and the fourth (Coquelin Run Spring) in Montgomery County, Maryland, not far from the District of Columbia line. The fifth known site (Burnt Mill Spring #6) is within the Norwest Branch Park in the Northwest Branch drainage in Montgomery County, Maryland, approximately 3 miles from the District of Columbia line. Thus, the current range of this species is limited to Federal land (three sites) and private property (one site) adjacent to approximately 4 linear miles of Rock Creek, and a single site to the east, on county parkland adjacent to the Northwest Branch. Both Rock Creek Park and the Northwest Branch Park are long, linear parks within heavily urbanized areas.

Kenks amphipod co-occurs with the federally listed (endangered) Hays Spring amphipod (*Stygobromus hayi*) at one site, Kennedy Street Spring.

Population Estimates/Status:

There are no reliable total population numbers for Kenks amphipod sites because of the difficulty of sampling them and the uncertainty concerning what portion of the population may remain out of reach in the ground water supplying the seep/springs (Feller 2005, p. 10). The species is typically found in small numbers and then only when ground water levels are high and springs are flowing freely. These conditions typically occur during the spring season, except during especially dry years. Given the small size of the shallow ground water aquifers occupied by this species, and the known characteristics of subterranean invertebrates, it is probable that each of the five populations is small (Hutchins and Culver 2008, pp. 36).

There is evidence of survival of the species at each of the five current sites (Feller 2005, pp. 57; Culver and Sereg 2004, p. 18). More recent observations made at Burnt Mill Spring #6 in Montgomery County, Maryland, in 2011 indicated the presence of *Stygobromus* amphipods. Several of these animals appeared to be Kenks amphipods based on their physical sizes in visual comparison to the other present amphipods (Feller 2012, pers. comm.). Observations at Kennedy Street Spring and East Spring in Rock Creek Park in 2012 have also confirmed the continued presence of *Stygobromus* amphipods at these locations. *Stygobromus* amphipods have not been observed more recently at Coquelin Run Spring because we do not have permission to access it. We assume that Kenks amphipod is still present at all five sites because we have no information to suggest that the site conditions have changed since they were last observed there, and Fellers (2012, pers. comm.) observation at the Montgomery County, Maryland, site indicates that amphipods may still be found when appropriate conditions exist.

Threats

A. The present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range:

General: Within the limited area encompassing the current range of this species, the vast majority of potential expanses of seepage spring habitat large enough to support this species (and maintain ground water recharge to its springs) has been significantly affected or completely destroyed by urban and suburban development (Feller 2005, p. 11) through both direct destruction of seepage spring locations and indirect impacts on hydrology resulting from the marked increase in impervious surfaces. Kenks amphipod is vulnerable to threats because of its limited geographic distribution and the infringement of urban development both outside and within Rock Creek Park (Feller 2005, p. 1). Due to large-scale hydrologic changes associated with intensive urban development (increase in impervious cover, contaminated surface area runoff, etc.), all ground water species within the District of Columbia are potentially threatened (Feller 1997, p. 1).

Fragmentation of habitat, as a result of ground water pollution and loss of ground water recharge, is also a factor affecting the species.

New construction surrounding Rock Creek Park, increased land use outside the park, internal park maintenance operations, and intensive recreational use all pose threats to the seep/spring habitats of this species. For example, prior maintenance activities at the National Zoo (which is located within Rock Creek Park) have resulted in piled tree cuttings and other debris in the spring area occupied by the Hays Spring amphipod (Moser 2011, pers. comm.), which negatively affected the site. While this is an example of effects to another species, similar challenges exist for the Kenks amphipod. Other threats to the park habitats are toxic spills (e.g., oil, gas), non-point source inputs (e.g., fertilizer and pesticides), additional land disturbance, sanitary sewer leaks, and excessive storm water flows that may affect ground water and related habitats (Culver and Sereg 2004, p. 13). Similar threats are present at the two Montgomery County, Maryland, sites known to support this species; these sites were found since the completion of Culver and Sereg's 2004 report. These two sites are within the Rock Creek and Northwest Branch watersheds (subunits of the Potomac watershed). Green space in the Rock Creek and Northwest Branch watersheds in Montgomery County is limited largely to county parks. These parks receive 13 million visitors annually (Feller 2005, p. 2). The habitat impacts associated with the intense recreational use from that many visitors can be severe.

Water Quality Degradation: Studies of water quality by Culver and Sereg (2004) included all three springs in Rock Creek Park supporting Kenks amphipod, but only the Sherrill Drive spring showed clear evidence of water quality degradation. However, water quality degradation is an ongoing threat and may have been a factor increasing the rarity of Kenks amphipod in Rock Creek Park. This is especially likely to the north of Military Road, in the four springs extending from Sherrill Drive Spring to Holly Street Spring. Sherrill Drive Spring is highly vulnerable to degradation because it is located at the base of the 16th Street embankment near the edge of the park (Feller 1997, p. 37). Threats include those associated with immediate proximity to heavily used roads and urban residential development. Urban runoff (containing high levels of cadmium, zinc, and nitrates) and erosion in the vicinity of this spring are significant threats to the water quality and stability of this spring. The nearby sanitary sewer line is structurally unsound and is subject to leakage (Feller 1997, p. 37; Yeaman 2011). This threat is present at many locations within Rock Creek Park and the Northwest Branch Park in Montgomery County because these are linear parks established along stream valley corridors that also function as corridors for buried sewer and water lines (Feller 2005, p. 2; Feller 2011). Adverse effects of ground water pollution, including sewage contamination, on amphipods and other invertebrates were documented by Simon and Buikema (1977), Sket (1977), and Culver *et al.* (1992). For instance, Simon and Buikema found that, in their study of a karst ground water system, amphipods were absent from ground water pools polluted by septic system effluent.

Culver and Sereg (2004) indicate that Kenks amphipod is barely surviving in Sherrill Drive Spring and is absent from the other three springs north of Military Road (Alaska, Holly, and Walter Reed Springs). Given the four springs geographic proximity to each other, the increases in heavy metal concentration and other water quality concerns in the springs habitat likely explain the absence of this amphipod from the other three springs (Culver and Sereg 2004, p. 73). The surveys conducted by Culver and Sereg (2004) are the most

recent comprehensive survey efforts for the species in Rock Creek Park. Surveys are undertaken only when Service or NPS funding is available.

The toxicity of heavy metals, especially cadmium and zinc, to amphipods and other aquatic crustaceans has been well documented and has been shown to result in mortality and sublethal effects at low concentrations (Eisler 1985; Eisler 1993; Gossiaux et al. 1992; Brumec-Turk 1998). In addition to finding heavy metal concentrations, Culver and Sereg 2004 (p. 69) found that Sherrill Drive Spring consistently had the highest conductivity (a measure of salinity) and nitrate values. Therefore, Sherrill Drive Spring shows anthropogenic influence and, consequently, greater degradation in water quality than the other four springs in Rock Creek Park with extant, high numbers of *Stygobromus* species (Kennedy Street Spring, Carter Baron Spring, East Spring, and Park Police Spring) (Culver and Sereg 2004, p. 69).

Water Quantity and Hydrology: The amount of impervious cover from residential and commercial development (buildings, parking lots, etc.) changes the hydrology of the watershed by preventing ground water recharge, resulting in decreased flows in the springs and seeps supporting this species. Feller (1997, p. 25) indicates the hydrology of East Spring, in Rock Creek Park, is affected by the existing extensive parking area, tennis courts, and lawn areas in parklands above the spring. Adverse effects on subterranean aquatic invertebrates from changes in hydrology have been documented in the literature (Culver *et al.* 1992; Datry *et al.* 2005).

Coquelin Run Spring, in Montgomery County, is immediately adjacent to an unnamed intermittent tributary of Coquelin Run (a tributary of Rock Creek). This unnamed tributary drains a residential development and occasionally floods the seepage spring emergence (Feller 2005, pp. 56). This site is at high risk of ongoing and continual hydrologic changes and pollution because it is on private land closely situated to extensive impervious surfaces and periodically subjected to runoff from residential development (Feller 2005, p. 9).

In summary, the present and threatened destruction or modification of this species habitat or range, particularly from water quality and quantity degradation, is the principal threat to this species. It is especially vulnerable to this threat because of its small range and the small size of the surface water catchment areas supporting each of the seepage springs it inhabits.

B. Overutilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes:

Overutilization is not known to be a factor threatening Kenks amphipod. The last scientific collections of this species were made during NPS or Service funded surveys as documented by Feller (1997 and 2005) and Culver and Sereg (2004). These surveys were conducted to evaluate the distribution of the species and involved the collection of very small numbers of Kenks amphipod. Because the occurrence of subterranean invertebrates at spring emergences represents only a small portion of the actual underground population, these collecting procedures are considered nondetrimental to the populations (Feller 1997).

C. Disease or predation:

Disease or predation is not known to be a factor threatening Kenks amphipod.

D. The inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms:

The District of Columbia laws currently provide no protection for this invertebrate species. However, Maryland has listed Kenks amphipod as a state endangered species under the Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act. This designation makes taking, possession, transportation, exportation, processing, sale, offer for sale, or shipment within the State of a State-listed species unlawful. Therefore, state regulations will provide the species limited protection at Maryland sites but, unlike Federal law and regulation, do not provide for the designation of critical habitat. The fact that one of the two Maryland sites is within a County park may facilitate protection of this site.

Some protection for the habitat at the three spring/seep sites supporting this species in Rock Creek Park is provided by the NPS. This conservation of park resources is mandated by the National Park Service Organic Act of 1916 and the Rock Creek Park enabling legislation of 1890. In addition, NPS policy requires that management of candidate species should, to the greatest extent possible, parallel the management of federally listed species (Pavek 2011). The NPS has made a concerted effort to protect the habitat of this species (see Conservation Measures Planned or Implemented section below for specifics); however, the NPS cannot provide protection of any seep recharge areas which extend outside Park boundaries.

Therefore, we conclude that the protections from existing regulatory mechanisms are not adequate to alleviate the threats to Kenks amphipod.

E. Other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence:

Because all known occurrences of this species are in wooded areas, widespread use of Dimilin to control gypsy moth outbreaks on public land in Maryland is a potential threat to the Kenks amphipod, as small concentrations of this pesticide are known to cause crustacean mortality (Feller 2009). Dimilin has been shown to be especially toxic to freshwater amphipods (Fischer and Hall 1992, p. 45). However, three of the five sites supporting this amphipod are not subject to this threat because the NPS does not permit the spraying of Dimilin in Rock Creek Park.

Climate change has the potential to adversely affect the species, particularly if it results in a significant change in the amount of precipitation in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. Decreases in precipitation within the species range may result in the drying up of seepage springs while increases in precipitation may result in washing away of important surface features or excessive erosion at seepage spring sites. However, because little information is available, there is high uncertainty regarding the extent to which climate change may be a threat to this species.

Conservation Measures Planned or Implemented :

As stated above, the NPS has made a concerted effort to protect the habitat of this species within Rock Creek Park. This has included working with the District of Columbia Department of Transportation so that design of the 16th Street road reconstruction and storm drainage project incorporated the construction of a storm sewer under Sherrill Drive, resulting in the elimination of a major outfall at the Kenks amphipod Sherrill Drive Spring site.

The Service, NPS, and the District of Columbia Department of the Environment are working cooperatively to fund best management practices (reducing erosion and increasing infiltration) on two tributaries flowing into the drainage of Kennedy Street Spring, which supports both Kenks amphipod and the federally endangered Hays Spring amphipod. In addition, the Service is seeking the expertise of a U.S. Geological Survey hydrogeologist to delineate the recharge areas of the seepage springs supporting Kenks amphipod. These measures are expected to assist in reducing threats to the species. However, NPS must continually deal with water quality threats from outside the park, as well as the demand for additional recreational features within the heavily used park. For the two seepage spring sites outside Rock Creek Park, we are not aware of any conservation measures that have been planned or implemented.

Summary of Threats :

The primary threats to this species are modification of hydrology (water quantity) and degradation of water quality at the seepage springs and spring runs of its aquatic habitat. Although all but one of the sites supporting this species are on Federal or county park land, significant water quality and quantity threats remain, in part because of the activities occurring on the private lands surrounding these narrow linear parks. Of particular concern are effects on the springs recharge areas, which may extend well beyond the boundaries

of the parks. With only five small sites in a relatively small geographic area known to support this species, it is highly vulnerable to the threats to the hydrology and water quality of its seepage spring habitat. Therefore, we find that Kenks amphipod should be listed throughout its entire range and that further analysis is unnecessary to determine whether it should be listed in a significant portion of its range.

For species that are being removed from candidate status:

_____ Is the removal based in whole or in part on one or more individual conservation efforts that you determined met the standards in the Policy for Evaluation of Conservation Efforts When Making Listing Decisions(PECE)?

Recommended Conservation Measures :

Measures are recommended to protect the water quality and hydrology at the springs and seeps supporting this species. These include:

- 1) Maintain a buffer around each of the seepage springs and associated spring runs where recreational activities, construction activities (including construction of new trails), erosion, and other activities that impact water quality are prohibited or discouraged.
- 2) Avoid any increase in impervious surfaces, loss of forested areas, road salting, erosion, and pesticide spraying in the catchment basins of each of the seepage springs.
- 3) Carry out studies to delineate recharge zones of each of the seepage springs known to support this species; this might be combined with a similar study of the federally endangered Hays Spring amphipods spring sites in Rock Creek Park. Once this delineation is complete, designate areas within the park to protect and manage these recharge zones.
- 4) Redirect existing artificial surface flows away from springs and spring runs supporting the species.
- 5) Initiate an outreach program for surrounding landowners within the catchment basins to educate them in regard to minimizing groundwater pollution and flow alterations.
- 6) Conduct nonlethal population monitoring of amphipods at least every other year at the springs where Kenks amphipod has been documented. This would include recording presence/absence of amphipods of the genus *Stygobromus* at the springs and the presence/absence of amphipods of appropriate size (56 mm) to be Kenks amphipod. Although some of the amphipods in this size range may be juveniles of other species, they would be an indication of active reproduction and a sign that habitat quality remains good for the Kenks amphipod, as well as the more common *Stygobromus* species.
- 7) Every 5 years, collect and preserve specimens of appropriate sized *Stygobromus* from the known Kenks amphipod springs for definitive identification by the species expert.
- 8) Every other year collect water quality data from the known Kenks amphipod springs; this could be done at the same time as amphipod monitoring.
- 9) If possible, develop a method to measure spring flow that does not damage springhead or spring run, and conduct measurements at the known Kenks amphipod sites.
- 10) Where it will result in overall benefit to the species, replace/repair or reline leaky sewer lines currently affecting four of the five seepage springs: Sherrill Drive, Kennedy Street, East Spring, and Burnt Mill Spring #6.

11) Contact Montgomery County to promote the above recommendations in Northwest Branch Park.

Priority Table

Magnitude	Immediacy	Taxonomy	Priority
High	Imminent	Monotypic genus	1
		Species	2
		Subspecies/Population	3
	Non-imminent	Monotypic genus	4
		Species	5
		Subspecies/Population	6
Moderate to Low	Imminent	Monotypic genus	7
		Species	8
		Subspecies/Population	9
	Non-Imminent	Monotype genus	10
		Species	11
		Subspecies/Population	12

Rationale for Change in Listing Priority Number:

Magnitude:

All five known sites of occurrence face threats to the hydrology and water quality of their springs. However, these threats are chronic in nature and appear to be increasing only gradually.

Imminence :

Pollution and/or hydrologic changes continue to occur at the majority of springs supporting this species.

 Yes Have you promptly reviewed all of the information received regarding the species for the purpose of determination whether emergency listing is needed?

Emergency Listing Review

 No Is Emergency Listing Warranted?

Emergency listing of Kenk's amphipod is not warranted at this time because the main threats to the species are chronic in nature and appear to be increasing only gradually. Extinction is not imminent because there are five extant sites and the intensity of threats at each of these sites varies considerably.

Description of Monitoring:

Regular monitoring of seepage spring flows (water quantity), water quality, and population numbers has not been implemented for this species. Methods/procedures to monitor flows, water quality, and population numbers should be explored. However, meaningful population monitoring may not be possible since the majority of the population is likely to be underground at any given time and the number of individuals

captured appears to depend more on flow levels than actual population levels. Current sampling is primarily aimed at determining presence/absence at individual springs when they are flowing. In March 2005, flow rates in the two Montgomery County sites supporting the species were estimated at 1 gallon per minute (gpm) (Feller 2005, pp. 56). Springs in Rock Creek Park had an average flow of 2.4 gpm during March and April (generally the wettest time of year) (Feller 1997, p. 11).

Indicate which State(s) (within the range of the species) provided information or comments on the species or latest species assessment:

District of Columbia, Maryland

Indicate which State(s) did not provide any information or comment:

none

State Coordination:

The State of Maryland's Wildlife and Heritage Program provided comments on this candidate assessment. The NPS biologists provided comments relating to the District of Columbia portion of Kenks amphipod range, since all known District of Columbia sites are found within Rock Creek Park.

Literature Cited:

Literature Cited:

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Approval/Concurrence:

Lead Regions must obtain written concurrence from all other Regions within the range of the species before recommending changes, including elevations or removals from candidate status and listing priority changes; the Regional Director must approve all such recommendations. The Director must concur on all resubmitted 12-month petition findings, additions or removal of species from candidate status, and listing priority changes.

Approve:

Approve: 
Regional Director, Fish and Wildlife Service

06/10/2013
Date

Concur:

Date

Did not concur:

Date

Director's Remarks: