

Alabama Department of
Conservation & Natural Resources
PRESS RELEASE

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Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Honored by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has honored The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' (ADCNR) Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division (WFF) with a Regional Director's Conservation Award. Accepting the award on behalf of the division were Fisheries Section Chief Stan Cook, Fisheries Section Assistant Chief Nick Nichols, and Dr. Paul Johnson, Director of the Alabama Aquatic Biodiversity Center in Marion, Ala. The awards ceremony was held May 4 in Atlanta.

The Regional Director's Conservation Awards are presented annually by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and highlight regional partner agencies, individuals and organizations for their significant contributions to the preservation, conservation and protection of plant and animal habitat and ecosystems. There are 10 states, including Alabama, in the Southeast region.

This year WFF received an award for its visionary leadership in aquatic conservation, establishing the Alabama Aquatic Biodiversity Center (AABC) and for developing a comprehensive multi-year propagation plan for more than 130 imperiled aquatic mollusks in the Mobile Basin and Cumberlandian Region in northeast Alabama.

The AABC is the largest state non-game recovery program in the United States. Its mission is to promote the conservation and restoration of rare freshwater species in Alabama and in turn restore cleaner water to state waterways. Over 40 species of freshwater snails and 25 species of freshwater mussels native to Alabama are now considered extinct. Today more than 50 species are considered threatened or endangered.

Sam D. Hamilton, Southeast Regional Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, believes the AABC's husbandry efforts are one of the keys to species recovery in Alabama. "Thanks to the efforts, leadership, and commitment of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Mobile and Cumberlandian regions continue to support the Nation's greatest freshwater biodiversity," Hamilton said.

Life history and habitat information developed at AABC is essential for aquatic habitat protection and restoration. The Center's hatchery progeny will be used to re-establish and expand the ranges of species most vulnerable to drought, spills, and other random events, including the effects of hurricanes and climate change.



The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources promotes wise stewardship, management and enjoyment of Alabama's natural resources through five divisions: Marine Police, Marine Resources, State Lands, State Parks, and Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries. To learn more about ADCNR, visit www.outdooralabama.com.