

# BRADENTON HERALD

## Feds will weigh if alligator snapping turtle is in peril

By Jenny Staletovich  
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What do a prehistoric snapping turtle, the Key Largo woodrat and a Georgia snail have in common?

They nearly vanished from the planet and could get more, or less, protection from the U.S. government.

On Tuesday, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced plans to conduct a periodic review of 22 endangered and threatened species in the Southeast, taking a look at how efforts to save them have fared. They are seeking public comment to determine whether the animals should be removed from the list or given more protection.

The agency also agreed to speed up its review of the alligator snapping turtle under a settlement with the Center for Biological Diversity that was announced Tuesday.



An alligator snapping turtle. Patrick Farrell Miami Herald

The largest freshwater turtle in North America, it can be found in Florida, mostly in the Panhandle. Across the U.S., numbers have dropped by 95 percent, with recent surveys showing they have likely disappeared from Iowa, Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri and Tennessee.

Federal wildlife managers have agreed to decide by 2020 whether to add the turtle to the Endangered Species List.