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Lawsuit seeks protection for crayfish from coal mining

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LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) - A federal lawsuit from an environmental group alleges two protected crayfish species are being harmed by coal mining in Kentucky, Virginia and West Virginia.

The Center for Biological Diversity alleges that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is late in designating habitat areas for the crayfish.

The Big Sandy crayfish and Guyandotte River crayfish were protected by the Endangered Species Act in 2016 because of habitat loss and water pollution, the suit says.

A U.S. Fish and Wildlife spokesman declined to comment because the lawsuit is pending.

The suit, filed Wednesday in West Virginia, says the crayfish are “highly imperiled due to declining water quality and habitat loss from coal mining and urban development within their watersheds.”

The group wants a judge to compel the agency to designate habitat areas.