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## "Endangered Species Act Has Too Many Loopholes"

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MID-SOUTH OUTDOORS



# Endangered Species Act Has Too Many Loopholes

MID-SOUTH OUTDOORS

*Handwritten:* \$-80 = not true! See over!



*Handwritten:* C.A. Sun., June 19, 1977 D9

By HENRY REYNOLDS

**W**ORK ON THE \$120 million Tellico Dam on the Little Tennessee River in East Tennessee has stopped, six years after construction began.

Why?

All because some biologist or scientist determined that the snail darter, a tiny, three-inch fish listed on the Endangered Species list and living and reproducing in the shoals of the swift river was being threatened.

With that bit of information, opponents of Tellico Dam, beaten in the courts six years ago, went back before robed justices.

A federal court ruling now has halted construction of the dam, which means the gates cannot be closed. Millions of tax dollars are standing idle in the form of concrete walls.

When the court originally ordered the

building of the dam, no fish, flower, bird or beast stood in the way. And the Little Tennessee was famous for its beautiful rainbow trout, smallmouth bass, waterbirds and wildflowers. Then, how could a three-inch fish pack so much dynamite?

Closing of the gates of Tellico Dam could well destroy the snail darter. But, really, does it make that much difference? This great nation has grown and prospered without the passenger pigeon, the Eastern Elk, the Woods Buffalo and the Heath Hen, to name a few of the extinct.

Stop and think how many people will benefit from finishing the dam. The energy shortage is not over and probably never will be. The dam will increase the stream flow into the Ft. Loudon powerplant on the Tennessee River enough to generate 200 million more kilowatt hours of electric power a year. And that's badly needed.

The preservationists, anti-hunting and anti-fishing groups are made up of intelligent people who leave no stone unturned in their efforts to get something done. They are loaded with money, have some of the best legal staffs in the country and can go the whole route.

FOR EXAMPLE, UP in Maine, construction of the proposed \$1.3 billion Dickey-Lincoln hydroelectric project may be blocked in order to save the Furbish lousewort, an endangered plant.

Again, the eastern part of this nation continues to experience blackouts and brownouts because of power shortages. Yet, the preservationists, working with the Endangered Species Act as their shield, can convince courts that Furbish louseworts and snail darters are more important to the nation than humans.

It is high time Congress took a new,

hard-nose look at Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, which protects the habitat of endangered creatures and plants from bulldozers and chainsaws. Too many citizens stand to suffer because of loopholes like the lousewort and the darter.

The day will probably come when some biologist peering through a microscope discovers a purple wing-tip mosquito in the path of a needed project and gets it stopped in the courts.

TAKE INTERSTATE 40's proposed route through Overton Park in Memphis as another example. This is one of the few sections of the coast-to-coast interstate highway that isn't completed. Thousands of motorists are inconvenienced every day.

Why? One reason is that the big 18-wheelers with their CB's blaring might make the monkeys on Monkey Island in

Overton Park Zoo nervous as the traffic cruises through the city. These same preservationists didn't blink an eye when old folks in the path of the interstate on both sides of the park were driven from their homes and paid a minimum for the only thing they had left in life. It is inconceivable that the only snail darters left in the world are in a small stretch of the Little Tennessee River. Or that the Madtom catfish shouldn't be disturbed in the Obion-Forked Deer River system. Or that the lousewort won't spring up somewhere else in Maine or other areas in that sector of the country.

SOMEONE ASKED WHY these differences can't be arbitrated. The preservationists don't want arbitration, mainly because human values would so outweigh their arguments that no important project probably would ever be stopped for such

meager means as they now are being halted by the courts.

If something of real value needs to be preserved, level-minded citizens of this country are going to see that it is. Too many of our laws and regulations have loopholes which enable special interest groups to operate through.

I realize that these thoughts are going to bring the roof down on top of me. That's the reason I have hiked off to the week-long conference of the Outdoor Writers Association of America at Macon, Ga.

In the meantime, Interstate 40 through Overton Park should be completed, just like Tellico Dam's gates should be closed. If Memphis city fathers do not see fit to move Overton Park Zoo to a more suitable location, then they should purchase a case of tranquilizers and feed them to the monkeys.

*Handwritten:* C.A.

*Handwritten:* July 19, 1977

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**Tiny Snail Darter Halts Work On Tellico Dam**