
Critical Habitat of the Endangered Banff Springs Snail

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Abstract: Critical habitat is defined under the federal *Species at Risk Act* as habitat necessary for the survival or recovery of a species. Since 1996, research has progressed towards the recovery of the endemic, endangered Banff springs snail (*Physella johnsoni*), a species confined to five thermal springs in Banff National Park, Alberta (see related abstracts by same authors). Microdistributional data from 99 population surveys conducted once every three or four weeks from January 1996 to January 2002 were used to define and delineate critical habitat. Areas within and along the thermal spring outflow streams that contained $\geq 75\%$ of the snail population during any one survey are indicated on maps. The protection of these critical habitats, the uppermost reaches of the thermal springs, are vital to the species' conservation.

Key Words: Banff springs snail, *Physella johnsoni*, thermal springs, habitat, species at risk, recovery, conservation, Banff National Park, Alberta