



## ***Website Record***

Project/Plant for which Website was accessed: CCNPP

Date Website was accessed and text copied: October 29, 2009

Team member accessing Website: R K Kropp

Internet location of website captured (URL):  
<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/rtehellbender.asp>

Text used from website for EIS below (copy and paste below):

### **Hellbender**



Hellbender  
(*Cryptobranchus alleganiensis*)

The Hellbender is a large aquatic salamander, the largest in Maryland. It may grow as long as two and a half feet. Although the hellbender is sometimes called the Allegheny Alligator or the Devil Dog, it is in fact harmless. Its bite is not poisonous. Its small teeth are used to eat crayfish, snails and worms.

The hellbender has a face only a mother, or a herpetologist, could love. The adult salamander, gray to olive brown colored, has a flattened head and body with a loose flap of skin running down each side. A single pair of circular gill slits may be found on the neck, just in front of the front legs. This species, as an adult, does not have external gills like the mudpuppy, another aquatic salamander. However, the larval hellbenders do have external gills; they look like ruffles on either side of the head.

This salamander prefers clear fast-flowing streams and rivers with rocky bottoms or other types of shelter, like submerged logs. Hellbenders are sensitive to pollution so they may act as indicator species for clean water.

Hellbenders lay eggs in the late summer. The males create shallow dish-shaped nests beneath flat rocks or logs. The females deposit the eggs in the nests and males fertilize them. The males then guard the nests. The larvae hatch in 2 to 3 months.

In Maryland, this species is considered Endangered. Hellbenders can only be found in the mountain streams and rivers of Garrett County, although historical records do exist for the Susquehanna drainage in Cecil and Harford Counties. Its national range extends from southwestern New York to Northern Alabama, along the Appalachians and in the Susquehanna River drainage in New York and Pennsylvania. Its western extent is southern Illinois, with a disjunct population in Missouri.

Because hellbenders are sensitive to water quality changes, they are threatened by anything that reduces water quality or flow of their streams: sedimentation from erosion, mine run-off, dam construction, pollution. Additionally, over-collection has also been a problem.

Because fishermen may find hellbenders when searching for bait under rocks, the MD Natural Heritage Program is asking anyone who finds a hellbender not to kill it and to contact us. Take note of the location and condition of the animal.

Photographs are an excellent way to record the animal's status; just remember this is an aquatic animal so you'll need to keep the gills wet. This species is not a threat to people or fish. If you find one, please release it unharmed.