ALYSSA OPPEDISANO, Dept of Organismal Biologu, Ecology, & Zoo Sciences, West Liberty University, West Liberty, WV, 26074. Conservation and taxonomic assessment of an undescribed crayfish species in coastal Virginia.

Creaserinus fodiens (Cottle 1863), commonly known as the digger crayfish, is a primary burrower that inhabits complex burrows in wetlands, seasonal pools, wooded floodplains, and roadside ditches. Historically, C. fodiens have been found from Ontario, Canada following the United States down to Texas and across four Atlantic slope states including Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, and South Carolina. The Atlantic slope clades are geographically isolated from other C. fodiens populations by the continental shelf on the East coast and by the Blue Ridge Mountains. Despite having a wide geographical range, little research has been done on the Atlantic slope clades of Creaserinus spp. Recent genetic and morphological data suggests that the Virginia population of C. fodiens could be described as a different species. Additional morphological and genetic data from gill samples will lead to a better understanding of where the separation in classification lies among the Virginia population. A conservation and taxonomic assessment for Creaserinus fodiens along the Virginia Atlantic slope will be constructed from the results. These assessments will contribute to our understanding of global crayfish biodiversity and provide important biological insight to the management and conservation of these species.