

## **Watercress Darter National Wildlife Refuge**

Alabama's smallest NWR, at 23 acres, is located near [Bessemer](#) in [Jefferson County](#) and was established in 1980 to protect the endangered watercress darter, a small, colorful fish that measures about two inches in length. Thomas Spring, a quarter-acre pond, is one of only a handful of springs in central Alabama where the fish was known to exist. The federal government constructed a second pond on the site in 1983 to provide additional habitat. In 1988, 100 watercress darters were relocated from Thomas Spring into this newly constructed pond, resulting in the establishment of a second successful population.