

Critical Habitat (Module 3)

Slide 1: Title

Critical habitat is one of the most well-known, yet misunderstood, aspects of the Endangered Species Act. It's essential to understand what this part of the Endangered Species Act does -- and does not -- do.

And it's my good fortune to join you for this part of the course. I'm Sandy Tucker, field supervisor for the Fish and Wildlife Service's Georgia Field Office in Athens, Georgia.

Critical habitat is a tool that has been in use since the 1980's, yet it's still something of a mystery to the public and to many of the organizations we work with. Let's de-mystify that portion of section 4 of the Endangered Species Act's listing process, designation of critical habitat.

When we finish, you'll be better able to assess whether certain areas are critical to the survival of a species, judge if critical habitat designation would be beneficial, and provide an explanation of who might be affected by a critical habitat designation.

Now that you know why this lesson on Critical Habitat is important, let's review our lesson objective.

Slide 2: Objective

In the previous topic we learned how a species is listed through the petition process.

Now we're going to learn about critical habitat and the factors that affect critical habitat designation. Specifically, you will be able to given a scenario involving an area with the necessary environmental factors to support a species, recognize if the area is "critical" based on the requirements listed in Section 4 of the ESA of 1973.

Now that you know what the objective is, let's take a look at what we will be covering.

Slide 3: Topics

First, I will go over some general critical habitat information.

Next, I will provide you with some information on critical habitat designation.

Finally, I will have you do some exercises that will allow you to apply the knowledge covered in this section of the module.

Now that you know what we will be covering, let's get started by going over some General Critical Habitat Information.