Slide 4: The Listing Process

Slide 5: Listing a Species
Whether our agencies or a citizen starts the process, listing a species under the Endangered Species Act is not an arbitrary process. The law specifies that listing of a species be accomplished through a rulemaking process that includes the opportunity for public review and comment.

Slide 6: Definitions
And the definitions of "endangered" and "threatened" are ones that you'll learn quickly – "endangered" means any species in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. "Threatened" means any species likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

Slide 7: Listing Decision
In our discussion, a decision to list encompasses a variety of options – adding to the list of endangered and threatened species; not adding to the list; reclassifying from endangered to threatened, or vice versa; and removing from the list, which is commonly called "delisting."

The Act specifies that critical habitat should be designated at the time of listing – another process that will be discussed later in this module.

Slide 8: The Five Factors
There are five major factors considered when a plant or animal is listed as endangered or threatened, or when the status of a listed species is changed:
These factors are:

- Present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range;
- Overuse for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes;
- Disease or predation;
- Inadequacy of current regulations; or
- Other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence.

Congress directed the agencies responsible for listing species to base their decisions "solely on the basis of the best scientific and commercial data available." The possible economic effects and other potential impacts of a listing decision aren't considered when making a listing decision. They can be considered in other decisions under the Endangered Species Act, such as designation of critical habitat.

Slide 9: Threats
A threat under any one of these five factors can trigger the listing of a species, if that species can meet the definition of endangered or threatened.

When making a listing decision for a species, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service not only consider threats, but they also assess conservation actions that might tend to lessen such threats, or have a positive effect on the species.

Slide 10: Start of the Listing Process

Listing generally starts in one of two ways – either an agency makes an internal assessment or it is petitioned by an interested person, government, or interest group. The petition process is covered in the next section of this module.

Slide 11: Internal Assessment

Listing agencies can perform an internal assessment for a potential species at any time. When we conduct an assessment, we routinely incorporate and assess information from the scientific literature, other resource agencies, tribes, universities, and trade organizations, among others.

Slide 12: Assessment Conclusion

If the assessment concludes there's sufficient information on a species' biological vulnerability and level of exposure to threats, a proposed listing could be justified and developed.

But if a proposed rule for listing is precluded by other, higher-priority listings, the species becomes a candidate for listing until such time as a proposed rule can be prepared.