

## **Endangered Species Act (ESA) Listing Decision for Eastern Small-footed Bat**

### **About the Document**

By the end of fiscal year 2013, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) will make a listing determination for the eastern small-footed bat (*Myotis leibii*). A listing determination means to prepare either a not warranted 12-month petition finding or a proposed rule to list the eastern small-footed bat as threatened or endangered. A proposed listing rule would also include a proposed designation of critical habitat, if prudent and determinable. If the Service proposes to list the eastern small-footed, a final listing determination would follow within the statutory timelines.

### **About the Peer Review Process**

**Peer review to be initiated by:** June 2013

**Peer review to be completed by:** September 2013

#### **Process:**

- The Service will conduct a peer review of the scientific information reviewed and used in our analysis of the listing determination, but not of our ESA policy conclusions regarding the species' status or critical habitat boundaries.
- The Service will solicit external peer review on the listing determination through letters to three independent scientific reviewers with expertise in eastern small-footed bat ecology, conservation biology, or bat ecology.
- Peer reviewers will be asked: whether we provide an accurate and adequate review and analysis of the threats, as categorized under the ESA's five factors, affecting the species; if our analysis of the five factors is logical and supported by the evidence we provide; whether we provide accurate and adequate review and analysis of why the proposed critical habitat designation is essential; and if we cite all necessary and pertinent literature to support our scientific analyses.
- If the Service moves forward with a final listing rule, the Service will use the information received from the peer review.

### **About Public Participation**

- Public comments on the listing decision for this species will be sought concurrently with publication of this decision document in the Federal Register and through distribution by mail and press release of this announcement to interested parties.
- This peer review plan will be posted on the Service's website for public review and comment.
- The Service will post a notice on its website of the final decision, which will include a summary of the results of the peer review process.

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