## UNIT 4

**ENGLISH: SAVING ENDANGERED SPECIES** 

## LESSON DESCRIPTION

This lesson plan will allow students to learn about endangered species and climate change. During the lesson, students will have the opportunity to practice their listening and speaking skills, through social interaction/s with their teacher and other classmates.



http://thegreentimes.co.za/wpcontent/uploads/2013/05/d433389b3 5164ea4979aa29364addb9c L.ipq

## APPLICATION OF THE LESSON PLAN

This lesson plan corresponds to the Unit K.4 of English. The plan can be used after the discussion of the topics: endangered and extinct species because of climate change.

## STANDARDS AND INDICATORS

- Listening: Listen and interact with peers and teachers during read-alouds, social interactions, group activities, and informal oral presentations. (K.L.1)
- Speaking: Engage in conversations and relate personal experience or story information by asking and answering simple yes-no and why-questions using gestures, words, and simple phrases. (K.S.1)

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Learn the difference between extinct and endangered species.
- Interact with classmates and develop team work skills
- Ask and answer questions with short and simple phrases

## **TIMING**

Start 10 minutos	<b>Development</b> 45 minutos	<b>Close</b> 5 minutos

### **MATERIALS**

Photocopies of worksheets (one per student)

## **VOCABULARY**

- Endangered species- A species that is at risk of becoming extinct because of human activity, changes in climate, changes in predator/prey ratios, and others.
- Extinction-Coming to an end or dying out.

## **CLASS GUIDE**

## **BEGINNING**

## Listening: 15 minutes

- The teacher will begin the lesson by discussing the vocabulary words (endangered species and extinction) with the students.
- After both new concepts are well explained and understood the teacher may proceed to teach the students about the species that are in danger of becoming extinct and the causes of their plight.

## **DEVELOPMENT**

## **Instructional Activities**

## Speaking: 30 minutes

- The teacher will divide the students in various groups with the same number of students in each group.
- Then, she will hand out two worksheets to each student. The students will help each other answer the table in the worksheet but they should hand them in individually. (attachment #2)

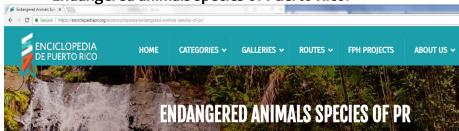
## **CLOSURE**

## Time: 5 minutes

- After the students are done completing the worksheets the teacher will choose one student per group.
- Each chosen student has to discuss their answers with the class, this will give the students the opportunity to review their answers in a class discussion.

## Attachment 1: Teacher's Materials

• Endangered animals species of Puerto Rico:



#### Endangered Animals Species of PR

#### **Endangered Animal Species**

Endangered species (ES) are those identified as such because their population numbers, in the opinion of the Secretary of the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (DNER), require special attention to ensure their perpetuation in the physical space where they exist. In Puerto Rico, 39 endangered species of fauna have been identified. These species are protected by Law Number 241 (Wildlife Law of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico) and Regulation Number 6766, which regulates the management of threatened and endangered species in Puerto Rico (Reglamento para



Regir el Manejo de las Especies vulnerables y en Peligro de Extinción del Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto). It is illegal to hunt or collect vulnerable or endangered species as well as possessing, transporting, or selling items derived from vulnerable or endangered species that have been identified by the Department.

Regulation Number 6766 establishes the following categories:

- 1-Critically endangered species is a species facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the immediate future.
- 2-Endangered species is one that, although not critically endangered, faces a high risk of extinction in the wild in the medium-term.
- 3-A vulnerable species is one that, although not critically endangered, faces a high risk of extinction in the wild in the immediate future.

#### Vulnerability

Among the factors that have contributed to jeopardizing these species are:

- 1. Loss and degradation of habitat, mainly because of human activities such as pollution, some developments, and fires.
- 2. Exotic species because they compete with native species for food and habitat.
- 3. Some natural processes (hurricanes) can accelerate the extinction of a species.

## Protection

In addition to implementing laws and regulations, it is necessary to protect important nesting areas and habitats of these species. Moreover, DNER has established recovery projects for some species, among which we can mention the Puerto Rican parrot, yellow-shouldered blackbird, and the Puerto Rican crested toad.

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Source: https://enciclopediapr.org/en/encyclopedia/endangered-animals-species-of-pr/

#### **Puerto Rican Parrot:**



#### Amazona Vittata (Puerto Rican parrot)

Family: Psittacidae

#### Introduction

The Puerto Rican Parrot, Amazona vittata, is the only native parrot species in Puerto Rico and, unfortunately, it is an endangered species. Therefore, it is very important for the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (DNER) to preserve existing individuals and their habitat, as well as supervising recovery programs for the species. They are protected by Law 241 of August 15, 1999 (Wildlife Law of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico) and Regulation Number 6766 which states that possession, sale, or purchase of the Puerto Rican parrot or any of its parts -including feathers, eggs, and nests- is illegal.



#### Description

The Puerto Rican parrot is relatively small in size, measuring approximately 29 cm long, and its average weight is 270 grams. Its tail is small and square, unlike the long, pointy tail of a parakeet. The color of the Puerto Rican parrot is primarily green. The tips of the wings are sky blue, visible only when they are in flight. It has a white ring around the eyes and a red stripe on its beak.

## Distribution

Historical documents reported the presence of the Puerto Rican parrot in all forest regions on the island; it was also reported in Vieques and Culebra. Today, it is confined to swamp cyrilla, mountain palm, and Candlewood forest types in the elevated areas of the Sierra de Luquillo mountain range in the Caribbean National Forest.

Some causes for the reduction in population of the Puerto Rican parrot are the following:

- 1. Loss of habitat due to massive deforestation on the island between the 19th and mid-20th
- 2. Catastrophic natural events such as hurricanes that struck the island in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of 20th century.
- 3. Capturing of young ones for the pet market.
- 4. Illegal hunting.
- 5. Human disturbance of nursery grounds.
- 6. Predation, mainly by the red-tailed hawk, pearly-eyed thrasher, mongooses, and rats.
- 7. Usurpation of natural nests by the pearly-eyed thrasher.
- 8. Parasitism by philornis sp fly.

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#### Population

Many years ago, the population probably exceeded a million individuals. A large reduction in the population began in the mid-19th century when much of the land was deforested for agricultural purposes; by 1950 the population had been reduced to 200 individuals. In 1970, the wild population reached its lowest point; only 13 to 15 parrots were known to exist. In 1973, a program for breeding in captivity began. In 2005, there was an estimated population of 200 individuals: 20 of them are found in the wild and about 180 are in captivity (74 in the aviary in Luquillo and 106 in the Jose Luis Vivaldi Aviary in Río Abajo, Arecibo).

The latter was established by the DNER in 1989 for breeding parrots in captivity; this facility is not open to the public. The aviary's main purpose is to serve as a bank of genetic material that represents the species and provides parrots for future reintroduction into the wildlife environment. In the Jose Luis Vivaldi Aviary in Río Abajo, there is profound respect for the Puerto Rican parrot as an animal of great cognitive capacity that, in addition to the basic need for food, water, and refuge, also needs to be provided with a proper environment that allows it to express its wide range of behaviors.

#### Food

In captivity, they are given a low-fat, commercial diet when they are not in breeding and one with a higher level of protein during breeding season. In the Jose Luis Vivaldi Aviary, the parrot's diet is supplemented almost every day with fruit, branches, and leaves gathered from the forest. In the wild, they feed on fruits, leaves, and seeds from more than 40 types of trees and shrubs.

Source: https://enciclopediapr.org/en/encyclopedia/amazona-vittata-puerto-rican-parrot/

## • Sea turtle:



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#### Introduction

Sea turtles appeared about 200 million years ago and survived drastic changes that occurred on Earth. With the arrival of modern man, populations of this animal group have been used to such extent that today they are in danger of disappearing in most parts of the world.

In Puerto Rico, there are very few nesting areas because man has intervened and destroyed their nests in his desire to obtain eggs. Of the few turtles that climb up to our beaches to nest, most are hunted in our waters to meet the needs of a growing black market. The few nesting areas that we still have are disappearing



as a result of construction of neighborhoods, industries, and tourist resorts in Puerto Rico's coastal areas.

## What are the most common turtle species in Puerto Rico?

The most common species found in Puerto Rico are the Hawksbill sea turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), Green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), and Leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*). The leatherback sea turtle does not remain in our waters all year; it only visits in the summer.

**Hawksbill Sea Turtle** (*Eretmochelys imbricada*) – Hawksbill is the most beautiful of sea turtles. Its hard carapace, called a shell, is formed by brown or dark brown and amber yellow plates. These plates are superimposed like roof tiles. The shell underside is called a plastron and is yellow. The skin on the head and fins has brown spots surrounded by yellow. This sea turtle measures slightly less than one meter in length and weighs just over 45 kilograms. Sea and terrestrial turtles are reptiles, have lungs, and breathe air. Although sea turtles may hold their breath for several minutes, they must rise to the surface to breathe. Hawksbills live in coral reefs where they feed on sponges, sea worms, fish, snails, and crabs.

**Green Sea Turtle** (*Chelonia mydas*) – When Christopher Columbus discovered the New World, there were thousands of these turtles in the Caribbean Sea but only a few exist today; the number of individuals has decreased over time. Columbus and other explorers, traders, colonizers, and pirates who later followed his footsteps, quickly realized that this turtle had a very pleasant taste which made it an exquisite dish on the table of many. In those days, sailors easily caught the docile animal and put it on its back, immobilizing it to facilitate the work, in order to keep it on board the ship and kill it when they needed fresh meat. Today, after hundreds of years, the Green sea turtle is still sought and hunted for consumption.

The Green sea turtle is brown, grows to more than one meter long and often weighs over 140 kilograms; it feeds on seagrass from beds near the shore.



**Leatherback sea turtle** (*Dermochelys coriacea*) – Leatherback is the largest sea turtle that exists today. It can measure up to 2.4 meters long and weigh 675 kilograms. Its predominant color is black with white spots. The leatherback sea turtle is the only sea turtle that does not have a hard shell. Instead, it is protected by a coriaceous skin which has seven longitudinal ridges. The leatherback is a nomad animal par excellence; its huge front fins allows it to travel thousands of miles. It can nest along the northern coast of South America and then swim toward the north, following the warm stream of the Gulf, along the east coast of North America. It has been seen feeding in places as far away as Nova Scotia, Canada. Its favorite food is a type of jellyfish that most animals try to avoid: siphonophore or poisonous jellyfish. Like all sea turtles, the leatherback has no teeth and instead uses its strong and sharp snout to eat.

Source: https://enciclopediapr.org/en/encyclopedia/sea-turtle-hatchery-project/#1464227505307-464689b9-becb

## Whales:



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#### Whales off Puerto Rico Coasts

#### Introduction

In waters near our shores, strange and melodic sounds can be heard during certain times of the year. It is the singing of whales that visit the island. Some of them are born here and return when they are about to give birth.

Marine mammals are not well known in Puerto Rico because they only appear occasionally and they can rarely be seen; that is the case of whales.



Rincón, Puerto Rico. (Courtesy María Calixta Ortiz)

The characteristics that distinguish mammals from other animals are: they are vertebrates of osseous skeleton; they are warm-

blooded; they breathe through lungs, have skin covered with hair, mammary glands, and a relativelydeveloped brain. However, whales have little or no hair in adulthood. On the other hand, their limbs have been modified for swimming.

Whales are the largest creatures in the world. Their size ranges between 14 feet (4.3 meters) and 110 feet (33.5 meters) long. These belong to the cetacean group.

There are two groups of whales Mysticeti cetaceans include large whales and are characterized by having hundreds of keratin plates instead of teeth. Some species within this group are: the fin whale, minke whale, and humpback whale.

The second group is known as toothed whales, which includes smaller whales with the exception of the sperm whale. They are characterized by having teeth. Some species within this group are: the short-finned pilot whale, orca, and cuvier's beaked whale.

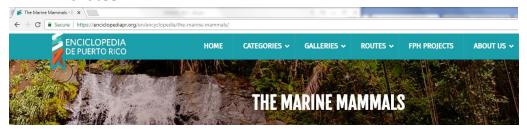
#### **Humpback Whale** (Megaptera novaeangliae)

This whale is found worldwide. The nodules on the head, long pectoral fins along with the patterns of white and black on the ventral area are characteristics of this species. Humpback whales have reached a great degree of brain development, which can be seen in their social behavior. They vary in size from 12 to 16 meters. Females are larger than males. Humpback whales migrate to our shores during the winter (November-April). They have been sighted off the coasts of Aguadilla and Isabela.

Author: Grupo Editorial EPRL Published: September 04, 2014.

Source: <a href="https://enciclopediapr.org/en/encyclopedia/whales-off-puerto-rico-coasts/">https://enciclopediapr.org/en/encyclopedia/whales-off-puerto-rico-coasts/</a>

#### Manatee:



#### The Marine Mammals

#### Introduction

In waters near our shores, strange and melodic sounds can be heard during certain times of the year. It is the singing of whales that visit the island. Some of them are born here and return when they are about to give birth.

Marine mammals are not well known in Puerto Rico because they only appear occasionally and they can rarely be seen. The best known marine mammals in Puerto Rico are manatees, because they live closer to the coast and they visit river mouths. Other marine mammals in the Caribbean are whales, dolphins, and sea lions. It is feared that sea lions may have become extinct.



Unlike fish, mammals are characterized by being: warm-blooded, they breathe through lungs, have skin covered with hair, internal fertilization and development of offspring, mammary glands, and a relatively-developed brain. Marine mammals hold their breath for long periods of time by plugging their ears while they are submerged. Some of these characteristics have been modified to adapt to aquatic life. For example, their limbs have been developed for swimming and whales have little or no hair when they reach adulthood.

Many of these species are endangered. Therefore, their conservation is essential and generates greater interest in our aquatic natural resources.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Caribbean Stranding Network, "Sea Grant" Program, and the Marine Sciences Department of the University of Puerto Rico, as well as other foreign organizations through a specialized staff, have focused their efforts toward research for better understanding these organisms.

Whales, dolphins, sea lions, and manatees are an integral part of our natural heritage. Therefore, they must be studied and fully protected.

#### Sirenians

The West Indian manatee, Trichechus manatus, is found from southeastern United States to the northwestern coast of Brazil. Two subspecies are identified: Florida manatees (*Trichechus manatus latirostris*), found in the southeast of the United States, and West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus manatus*), found in the rest of the Caribbean, including Puerto Rico.

The adult manatee can reach a length of 4.3 meters and can weigh more than 1,600 kg. Females tend to be longer and heavier than males. The color of adults ranges from gray to brown; offspring are dark-colored at birth, and their color lightens after the first month.

Manatees are primarily herbivores. They feed on a variety of submerged, floating, and emerging aquatic plants. In Puerto Rico, manatees feed mostly on marine herbs such as are thalassia and syringodium. Adults consume approximately between 8 and 11 percent of their body weight per day. Their peculiarity of being the only herbivore marine mammal gives them a major ecological niche. Manatees serve as biological agents for the control of aquatic vegetation and can influence other levels of aquatic ecosystems such as distribution, production of the plants they consume, and encouraging nutrient cycling.

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Freshwater, estuarine, and marine ecosystems may serve as habitat for the West Indian manatee, which may move freely between areas of extreme changes in salinity. Manatees have no specific mating season; therefore, offspring may be born throughout the year. They have a low reproductive rate: their gestation period is about 13 months and have a single offspring every 3 to 5 years. These reproductive characteristics make this species highly vulnerable. Offspring depend on their mothers for a minimum of two years, but remain together until they are four years old, not just for food but to learn migration routes and feeding sites.

In Puerto Rico, manatees are found around the entire island, except in the islands of Desecheo and Mona. They are mostly seen from the town of Dorado to the town of Mayagüez, but especially in the area of Fajardo, Ceiba, Jobos Bay in Guayama and at the mouth of the Rio Guanajibo in Mayagüez. The manatee is considered the most endangered marine mammal in the entire area of the northeastern Caribbean. Studies conducted at the end of the 1970s and in 1984 suggest that only between 63 and 200 manatees remain in Puerto Rico. Its endangered status is directly related to human contact, as evidenced by excessive hunting of the species and deaths due to accidents with fast boats.

Source: https://enciclopediapr.org/en/encyclopedia/the-marine-mammals/#1478142306304-38313e81-668e

### Coral Reefs:



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### The Coral reefs off shore

#### What is a coral reef?

Coral reefs are one of the most attractive and most complex biological communities on the planet. The word "coral" is used to describe a group of tiny organisms, from the phylum Cnidaria, that secrete hard calcareous skeletons and live in colonies in the form of polyps.

In the Caribbean, there are more than 70 stony corals, whose skeletons are complex structures we call coral reefs. Associated with these are soft or horny corals, some Zoantharia, and millepora or "stinging corals".



Coral reef off a Puerto Rico coast

### Biology and ecology of coral reefs

The biological combination of colonial organisms and associated flora and fauna make up the coral reef, one of the biological systems in which nature expresses its greatest splendor and complexity. Slow but steady coral growth takes thousands of years; the accumulation of sediment and fragments that are generated in the reef allows corals to survive, despite increases in sea level. The vertical growth, at the rate of 0.5 to 1.5 cm per year, allows the reef to adjust to these changes. Many of the modern reefs were established less than 15 thousand years ago when sea level was 85 meters (279 feet) below the current level, and island platforms began to flood as a result of the rapid rise in sea level.

Coral polyps have tentacles with which they capture zooplankton that swims freely in the water. The most unique characteristic of polyps is that they have unicellular algae, known as zooxanthellae, inside.

Numerous hiding places between coral blocks provide shelter to a wide variety of animals including sponges, worms, mollusks, crustaceans, sea urchins, sea stars, holothurians, and fish that are characterized by vivid, contrasting colors. This complex community of organisms, closely integrated as a result of a long evolution, gives rise to the ecosystem of coral reefs. The deployment of colors found in the reef is not an accident but rather the result of the complexity of that biological community.

From an environmental point of view, the development of coral reefs is limited to relatively stable places with very specific ecological conditions.

- Warm temperatures, never lower than 21-22°C (70°F)
- Good lighting
- High salinity
- · Low tolerance of suspended sediments
- Waves and currents
- Low tolerance for prolonged emersion

### Distribution and types of reefs

The above conditions only occur in shallow areas of the tropical seas. In the Caribbean, there are favorable conditions for the growth of corals in the West Indies, especially along drier coasts where there are no rivers



or sediment supply. In Puerto Rico, there are important coral areas on the east, south, and southwest coasts. The north coast has no large coral development probably because plentiful rivers flow into it and bring large amounts of sediment. The continental shelf north of the island is also very steep and falls deep near the coast. The space available for the establishment of this type of community is limited by those factors.

#### In Puerto Rico, there are three types or forms of reefs:

- Fringing reef This type of reef surrounds a non-coral coastline. It is often separated from the coast by a lagoon or shallow, narrow body of water whose floor is covered in calcareous sands and seagrass. This type of reef is one of the most common in Puerto Rico; but because of its proximity to the coast itself, it is also the one most degraded by human activity.
- Barrier reef This type of reef occurs further away from the coast. In Puerto Rico, this type is represented by a reef which lies at the edge of the island shelf at depths of 20 meters (65 feet).
- Bank reefs Bank reefs are located on the platform between the two previous types. This type of structure is known as coral platform or bank-barrier. These reefs often acquire crescent shapes because the coral grows and consolidates preferably towards the waves.

#### Coral reefs respond to disturbance

Coral reef systems are highly complex and, therefore, damage caused by natural disturbances or human beings can take many decades to be repaired. However, the species that constitute the reef include relatively fast-growing species; this allows the "healing" of damage caused by disturbances that leave no residual actions. Unfortunately, the actions of human beings on these ecosystems often do not allow these mechanisms of natural regeneration to operate, causing chronic disturbances that lead to the deterioration and eventual collapse of the system.

#### **Natural disturbances**

- Storms In our geographical region, hurricanes and storms are one of the most violent natural disturbances that act on coral reefs. These storms generate waves of great strength that break corals and detach blocks of coral rock, which in turn cause extensive damage when they slide or roll over the ocean floor. Paradoxically, these changes tend to renew the vital processes of the system and, in the long run, may be beneficial as they contribute to further growth and development of new habitats.
- Changes in sea level The scientific community has expressed great concern with regard to the changes in sea level that we are experiencing because of the so-called "greenhouse effect" caused by emissions of certain gases into the atmosphere. In the case of corals, there is concern that these systems are experiencing severe degradation that could make it impossible for them to persist given the speed of sea level changes that have been predicted.
- Coral bleaching Coral bleaching is a phenomenon that is happening in many areas of the Caribbean, but its causes are unknown. Bleaching, which is caused by the expulsion of zooxanthellae, has been attributed to small increases in the average temperature of surface waters in the area of the greater Caribbean.

### Disturbances caused by human activity

• Sedimentation and enrichment of the waters – In Puerto Rico, some rivers transport up to 100 metric tons (200,000 lbs.) per hectare of suspended sediment per year. These sediments reach the sea where they scatter and degrade the quality of coastal waters. Reef systems subject to sedimentation are quickly destroyed or degraded. Nutrients that enrich the water cause phytoplankton and the organisms (zooplankton) that feed on them to appear. This appearance reduces the transparency of the water and causes sedimentation of organic material. It also favors the colonization of reef substrates by fleshy filamentous algae that grow on live corals and destroy them.



- Overfishing Although the reef is a system of very high productivity, these systems are highly vulnerable to over-exploitation. Selective fishing of certain species can destabilize the system when those species have vital functions in its maintenance.
- Removing corals or "live rocks" The removal of corals leads to destruction of habitat and impoverishment of the areas. It also reduces the aesthetic value of these areas. In Puerto Rico, the removal of corals is forbidden by the Reglamento para Controlar la Extracción, Posesión, Transortación y Venta de Recursos Coralinos (Regulations for controlling, gathering, possessing, exporting, and selling of corals).
  - Ship grounding On February 15, 1985 a ship named "A. Regina" was grounded east of Mona island causing coral destruction on a system of spur and grooves that characterizes the external slope of the reef edge located in that area. The direct destruction due to the movement of the hull of the ship, which weighed over 3,600 tons (7,200,000 lbs.) affected approximately 5,875 square meters (19,270 feet) of reef floors. The pulverizing of the floor and the dispersion of fine sediments affected an area of over 15 hectares -an area more than 25 times larger than that destroyed by the hull of the ship.

#### Importance of coral reefs

The importance of coral reefs is:

- They protect us from heavy tides and waves during storms and hurricanes;
- They significantly modify the speed and direction of ocean currents, allowing the establishment of communities associated with this system such as seagrass prairies and mangrove swamps;
- They export nutrients to terrestrial systems where sea currents go from sea to land, and receive nutrients from these terrestrial systems when currents go from land to sea;
- They serve as habitat for many marine species of human consumption and as a bridge of commercial and recreational fishing;
- · They have many aquatic animals that are food sources for higher organisms;
- They are valuable landscapes because of their variety and diversity of colors and shapes;
- · They are sources of recreation for many people who practice diving; and
- They are sources of natural products of biomedical potential and in manufacturing industries.

#### Conclusion

The productive potential of the coral reef ecosystem and its ability to generate goods and services (e.g as tourist attractions) depends on maintaining its structural integrity and protecting the quality of the water that surrounds these systems. We also have an inescapable responsibility of protecting them so that they can be used by future generations of Puerto Ricans.

These extremely fragile systems require special handling to ensure their persistence. A significant element in handling these resources is the awareness of citizens about the importance of these systems, their vulnerability, and the care they need in order to be protected. The protection of these resources is a task that must be shared by all.

Author: Grupo Editorial EPRL Published: August 27, 2014.

Source: <a href="https://enciclopediapr.org/en/encyclopedia/the-coral-reefs-off-shore/">https://enciclopediapr.org/en/encyclopedia/the-coral-reefs-off-shore/</a>

## Additional source of information to consult:

• Endangered Animals Species of Puerto Rico:

https://enciclopediapr.org/en/encyclopedia/endangered-animals-species-of-pr/#1464228860162-d925e478-bac1

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• Whale protection:

https://www.cbsnews.com/news/federal-government-eases-humpback-whale-protection/

• Coqui:

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http://manatipr.org/aprendemas/elmanaticaribeno/

• Sea Turtle:

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Coral reefs:

https://www.care2.com/causes/6-of-the-worlds-most-endangered-coral-reefs.html

Attachment #2: Worksheet	

Name:				
Date:				

# Complete the following table

Species	Habitat	Causes/threats	What can we do to help?
Manatee			
Corals			
Coqui			
Sea turtles			
Humpback Whales			
Puerto Rican parrot			

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