

Caribbean

Ecological Services Field Office



photo: USFWS



photo: Robert Van Dam



photo: Puerto Rico Dept. of Natural and Environmental Resources



photo: USFWS

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Photos (top to bottom)

Coastal mangrove forest.

Endangered hawksbill turtle.

Endangered yellow-shouldered blackbill.

Cabo Rojo salt flats.

Station Facts

- Established: 1974.
- FY 05 budget: \$1,459,000.
- Number of staff: 16.

Station Goals

- To protect endangered species through the administration of pre-listing, consultation and recovery activities in cooperation with other Federal agencies, Commonwealth and Territorial agencies and non-governmental organizations in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- To conserve and enhance wildlife and wetland resources by evaluating and recommending modifications of projects proposed for Federal construction, funding or authorization.
- To evaluate impacts of contaminants on trust resources and aid in remediation of impacts and restoration of habitats and resources.
- To develop partnerships with Federal, Commonwealth and Territorial agencies, organizations and citizen groups to address a wide variety of issues affecting fish and wildlife resources and their habitats.
- To work cooperatively with nations of the greater Caribbean Basin to address shared resource issues.

Services Provided to

- Private citizens.
- Federal, Commonwealth and Territorial agencies.

- Non-governmental organizations.
- Public and private schools.

Activity Highlights

- Protects lands important to endangered species and migratory birds through the acquisition of lands for the Caribbean Islands National Wildlife Refuge, in conjunction with other agencies and non-governmental organizations.
- Summarized biological information on the river resources of Puerto Rico to evaluate and modify Corps of Engineers water development projects to ensure the protection of river resources.
- Provides assistance to the U.S. Attorney's office and the Army Corps of Engineers for the prosecution of violations of the Clean Water Act.
- Provided education and outreach services to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands since 1995 to greatly increase the visibility of Service programs in the Caribbean. Outreach activities and/or products include: talks, videos, exhibits, posters, fact sheets, Homepage, etc.
- Establishes working partnerships to protect coastal fisheries and coral reefs. Provides for wetland restoration, endangered species propagation and protection of neo-tropical migratory bird habitat.
- Actively participates with the Service's Caribbean Ecosystem team which has assisted in the restoration of a Service Law Enforcement presence in the Caribbean and is working toward the development of strategies to address major resource issues affecting coastal, karst and riverine habitats.

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- Works towards the development and implementation of mechanisms to protect nesting sea turtles and emerging hatchlings from artificial light pollution on beaches in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- Has administrative responsibility for the Puerto Rican Parrot Recovery Project (Río Grande Field Office).
- disease or predation;
- inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms; and
- other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence.

Questions and Answers

How many Federally listed species are in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands?

There are a total of 78 listed threatened or endangered species in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. There are 29 listed animals which include three amphibians, 11 reptiles, 10 birds, five mammals and 49 listed plants.

How does the Endangered Species Act protect a species?

Once a species is listed, the Act protects species through the prohibition of take, the implementation of recovery projects, cooperation with the states, provisions for habitat acquisition, consultation on federally funded and permitted projects, through the permitting process, and by education.

Why does the FWS comment on development projects?

Other Federal agencies are required, under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, to consult with the FWS on actions they authorize, conduct, and/or permit. The Service also coordinates with state agencies and comments on other projects as well.

Why are species listed?

Five factors are considered when deciding whether a species needs to be listed:

- destruction or modification of habitat;
- overutilization for commercial, recreational, scientific or educational purposes;

What is the penalty for violating the Endangered Species Act?

The Act states that to kill, damage, harass, trap, buy, or sell an endangered species or products derived from that species is a violation of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 and can carry a fine of \$100,000.00 maximum and/or one year in prison.