

# Caribbean *Ecological Services Field Office*



photo: USFWS



photo: Robert Van Dam

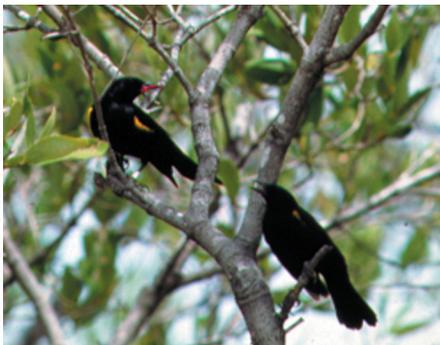


photo: Puerto Rico Dept. of Natural and Environmental Resources



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.
- 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 private landowners in restoring and protecting wildlife habitat.

## Services Provided to

- Private citizens.
- Federal, Commonwealth and Territorial agencies.
- Non-governmental organizations.
- Public and private schools.

## Activity Highlights

- Works with private landowners and other non-federal entities to develop Habitat Conservation Plans that authorize incidental take of listed species. Incidental take permits are required when non federal activities will result in “take” of threatened or endangered species.
- 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.
- Provides education and outreach services to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to greatly increase the visibility of Service programs in the Caribbean. Outreach activities and/or products include: talks, videos, exhibits, posters, fact sheets, website, 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.
- Conserves and improves coastal resources which include rain forests, coral reefs, coastal lagoons, sea grass beds, dry forests, mud and salt flats, mangroves.
- 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 Program.
- Develops Safe Harbor agreements, which are voluntary, cooperative ventures between a landowner and the Service. These agreements encourage landowners to maintain or enhance existing populations of listed species and create, restore or maintain habitats in a manner that

will benefit listed species. In return, the Service provides assurances that future landowner activities will not be subject to ESA restrictions.

- Develops Safe Harbor agreement which are voluntary cooperative ventures between a landowner and the FWS that encourage landowners to maintain or enhance existing populations of listed species, create, restore or maintain habitats and/or manage their lands in a manner that will benefit listed species. In return the Service protects assurance that future landowner activities will not be subject to ESA restrictions.

### 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;
- disease or predation;
- inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms; and
- other natural or man-made factors affecting its continued existence.

*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.