



Name: _____

Save our Species

The greater Everglades contains one of the highest concentrations of species vulnerable to extinction in the United States. The diverse ecosystem in southern Florida is home to at least 70 endangered and threatened species, while our state has the third highest number of endangered species in the United States.

The list of Everglades flagship species is endless. Here are a few key species including several The Everglades Foundation is monitoring. Let's work together to save those species.

Directions: Read the article *Save our Species* (attached below), and answer the questions below.

Everglades Literacy Lesson Connection:

Grade 4 Lesson 2: Wanted Alive

<https://www.evergladesliteracy.org/fourth-grade>

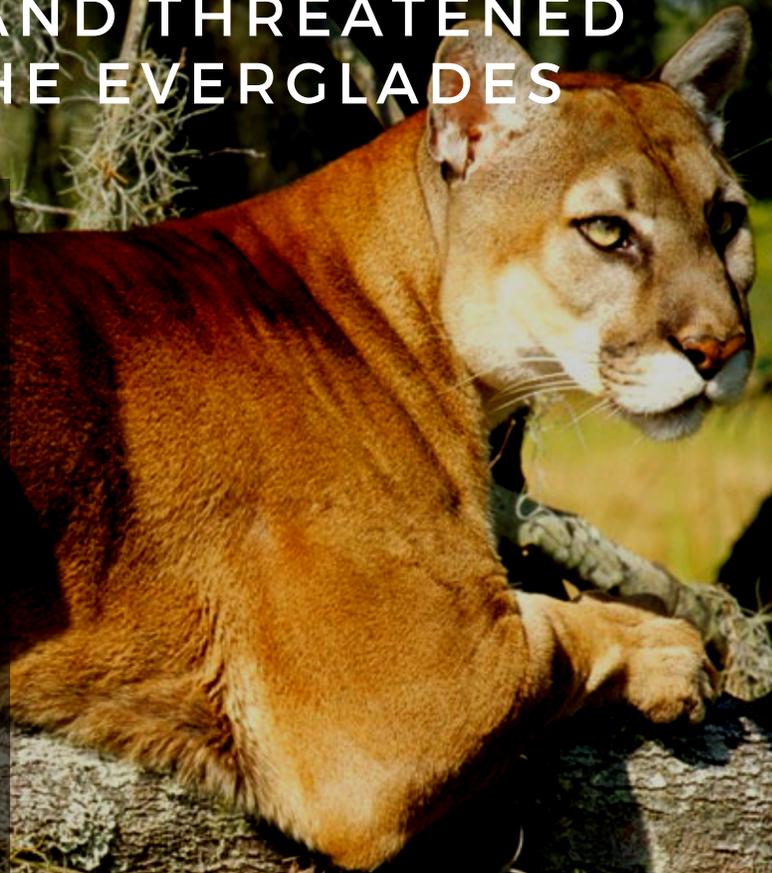
-Students will read a book titled Everglades by Sean Craighead George. They will research a threatened or endangered animal species and create a poster of their findings.

SAVE OUR SPECIES

ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES IN THE EVERGLADES

The Florida Greater Everglades contains one of the highest concentrations of species vulnerable to extinction in the United States. The diverse ecosystem in southern Florida is home to at least 70 endangered and threatened species, while our state has the third highest number of endangered species in the United States. The classification of endangered means a species is in danger of becoming extinct, while threatened is a less severe classification meaning a species likely to become endangered in the near future. Many of our species at risk here are emblematic of the Everglades ecosystem, such as the Florida panther and American crocodile. Pollution and loss of original habitat are two main factors threatening to over-run one of the most unique habitats in North America. The top priority, most conservationists would now agree, is first to secure and protect the natural habitat required by each species in as pristine an ecological state as possible, and then secondly to monitor the progress of species within that habitat. With the implementation of Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) projects and water flow restoration, we are confident these management actions will benefit many imperiled species.

The list of the Everglades flagship species is endless. Here are a few key species including several the Everglades Foundation is monitoring. Let's work together to save these species.



Florida Panther

Felis concolor coryi

Status:

Endangered

Number remaining in Florida:

up to 230

The Florida panther is the last subspecies of mountain lion found in the eastern United States, in less than 5% of its historic range in South Florida. The panther continues to face numerous threats due to an increasing human population that fuels habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation, and vehicular collisions.

Everglades Snail Kite

Rostrhamus sociabilis plumbeus

Status:

Endangered

Number remaining in Florida:

2,585

The Everglade Snail Kite, which feeds almost exclusively on apple snails, is found in Florida and Cuba. Habitat loss, altered hydrology and lowered water quality have led to declines in apple snails, and their predators, Everglades snail kites.

Wood Stork

Mycteria Americana

Status:

Threatened

Wood Storks nesting in Florida:

6,948 nesting pairs

The only species of stork that breeds in the United States, wood storks are found in the southern United States, the Caribbean, Mexico, and Central and South America. The South Florida population has collapsed due to agricultural expansions, altered hydrology, and the drainage of cypress stands.

American Crocodile

Crocodylus acutus

Status:

Threatened

Number remaining in Florida:

2,000 to 2,500 individuals

At the northernmost part of their range in South Florida, American crocodiles are found in the Caribbean, Mexico, Central America, and northern South America. Historically hunting was a big threat to crocodiles, while currently crocodiles are imperiled by continued (illegal) hunting, habitat destruction, hydrological alterations in their habitats, predation, vehicle strikes, disease, and hurricanes.





Key Deer

Odocoileus virginianus clavium

Status:

Endangered

Number remaining in Florida:

700 to 800

The Key deer is the smallest subspecies of white-tailed deer found only in the Florida Keys from Big Pine Key to Sugarloaf Key. Hunting and habitat destruction led to their near disappearance, and collisions with cars also pose a threat.

Florida Manatee

Trichechus manatus latirostris

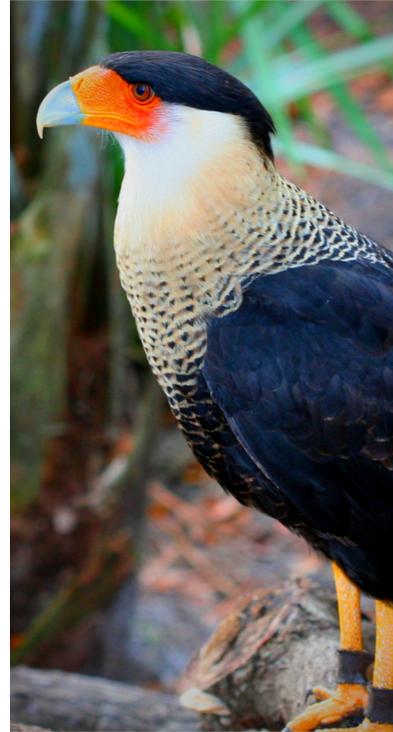
Status:

Threatened

Number remaining in Florida:

6,300

The Florida manatee is found in coastal Florida waters in winter but can range as far as Texas and Massachusetts during summer months. The main threats to manatees are boat collisions, habitat loss from coastal development, pollution, diseases, natural disasters, and red tide.



Audubon's Crested Caracara

Polyborus plancus audubonii

Status:

Threatened

Number remaining in Florida:

400 to 500

Audubon's crested caracara is a non-migratory species that occurs in Florida as well as the southwestern U.S. and Central America. Their main threat is habitat loss by urban and agricultural development.

Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow

Ammodramus maritimus mirabilis

Status:

Endangered

Number remaining in Florida:

3,021

Nicknamed the "Goldilocks bird", the Cape Sable seaside sparrow is the only bird restricted entirely to the Everglades system. The habitat conditions have to be just right for this sparrow to survive, but unfortunately, south Florida's Everglades system has been the target of drastic water-level manipulation that has been devastating to the bird's population.





Florida Scrub-Jay

Aphelocoma coerulescens

Status:

Threatened

Number remaining in Florida:

3,400-3,600 family groups

The Florida scrub-jay is found only in Florida where it is threatened by habitat destruction, fragmentation, and degradation from development and agriculture. The scrub-jay population has declined 90% in the past century due to these threats.

Miami Blue Butterfly

Cyclargus thomasi bethunebakeri

Status:

Endangered

Number remaining in Florida:

Several dozen

The Miami blue is a small blue butterfly endemic to Florida. Long thought extinct, it was recently discovered in Key West and Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuges. Threats to the Miami blue include habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation, and invasive species.

Florida Leafwing Butterfly

Anaea troglodyta floridalis

Status:

Endangered

Number remaining in Florida:

Several hundred or less

Native to South Florida, this species conceals its bright orange coloration by folding up its wings, colored brown and gray on the undersides, to resemble a leaf. Currently restricted to Everglades National Park, reasons for its decline include habitat destruction, exotic species, fire suppression, insecticide use, and collection.

Lower Keys Marsh Rabbit

Sylvilagus palustris hefneri

Status:

Endangered

Number remaining in Florida:

100 to 300

These small to medium sized rabbits are endemic to the Florida Keys. They are imperiled by habitat loss, pollution, vehicular road kill, predation by stray cats, sea level rise, and storm surges from hurricanes.



Name: _____

Save our Species Comprehension Questions

1. **True/False** (Choose one)-Florida has the third highest number of endangered species in the United States.
2. What are two main factors threatening Everglades species?

3. About how many Florida panthers can be found in the Everglades today?
 - a. About 550
 - b. About 1,000
 - c. About 230
 - d. About 100
4. The American crocodile is listed under which status?
 - a. Threatened
 - b. Critically Endangered
 - c. Extinct in the Wild
 - d. Endangered
5. Where are Key deer found?

6. **True/False** (Choose one) The Audubon's crested caracara's main threat is habitat loss by urban and agricultural development.
7. The Florida scrub-jay can only be found in Florida and its population has declined by _____ in the past century?
 - a. 25%
 - b. 90%
 - c. 65%
 - d. 10%
8. What is the endangered Everglades butterfly species that is restricted to Everglades National Park only?

9. **True/False** (Choose one)-The greatest threat to leatherback sea turtles is oceanic algal blooms affecting their habitat.
10. What are some threats to the loggerhead sea turtle?

Save our Species Comprehension Questions - Answer Key

1. **True/False** (Choose one) Florida has the third highest number of endangered species in the United States. -
the United States. -
2. What are two main factors threatening Everglades species?
Pollution and loss of original habitat
3. About how many Florida panthers can be found in the Everglades today?
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4. The American crocodile is listed under which status?
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5. Where are Key deer found?
Key deer are found only in the Florida Keys from Big Pine Key to Sugarloaf Key.
6. **True/False** (Choose one) The Audubon's crested caracara's main threat is habitat loss by urban and agricultural development.
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8. What is the endangered Everglades butterfly species that is restricted to Everglades National Park only?
Florida Leafwing Butterfly
9. **True/False** (Choose one) The greatest threat to leatherback sea turtles is oceanic algal blooms affecting their habitat.
10. What are some threats to the loggerhead sea turtle?
Loss of nesting habitat, predation of nests, human disturbances that cause disorientations during the emergence of hatchlings, incidental captures from fishing, and pollution.