

Caribbean Island Biogeography Meets the Anthropocene

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Islands are vulnerable for the introduction of exotic plants and the loss of indigenous species because island ecosystems often contain few species. People have driven both the colonisation and extinction rates far above the natural values. Land use, economic activity and demography are now more important than the natural factors of isolation and size in explaining the number of species on islands. The island economy of the Netherlands Antilles is strongly linked to an intact and well-functioning ecosystem. Now the question is which species are most at risk. This research will integrate the consequences of human activities in predictive models about biodiversity on islands. That must lead to the identification of natural and human factors that determine the spread of species across Caribbean islands. These factors can predict the future of biodiversity on the Netherlands Antilles and provide knowledge for management decisions concerning the protection of the island ecosystems.