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Parrotfish to rescue coral reefs

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2nd November, 2007

THE ARTICLE

Parrotfish to rescue coral reefs

One of Earth's most exquisite creatures, the parrotfish, may be the key to saving the Caribbean's world-famous coral reefs. This is according to a new report published in the journal 'Nature'. Report author professor Peter Mumby, a marine ecologist from the UK's Exeter University, says overgrown seaweed is making it hard for the coral to breathe. He found the parrotfish is the only fish that eats the seaweed. However, over-fishing has reduced the numbers of parrotfish, which means the coral is at serious risk of being damaged beyond repair. Mumby said: "The future of some Caribbean reefs is in the balance and if we carry on the way we are, then reefs will change forever. This will be devastating for the Caribbean's rich marine environment, which is home to a huge range of species as well as being central to the livelihood of millions of people."

Professor Mumby says that in order to ensure a future for the reefs, parrotfish need to be protected. These colourful fish are frequently caught in fishing nets and end up being sold in local markets. Mumby added: "The good news is that we can take practical steps to protect parrotfish and help reef regeneration. We recommend a change in policy to establish controls over the use of fish traps, which parrotfish are particularly vulnerable to. We also call on anyone who visits the Caribbean and sees parrotfish on a restaurant menu to voice their concern to the management." The reefs have been in decline since the 1980s. Global warming has added to the problem by bleaching coral and wiping out other species that fed on the seaweed. Professor Mumby hopes the parrotfish can become a symbol of ecosystem success in the Caribbean.

WARM-UPS

1. EXQUISITE FISH: Walk around the class and talk to other students about beautiful and exquisite fish. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your original partner(s) and share what you found out.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

exquisite creatures / coral reefs / seaweed / over-fishing / people's livelihoods / local markets / taking practical steps / regeneration / being vulnerable / menus

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. CREATURE KEYS: Parrotfish may be the key to saving coral reefs in the Caribbean. With your partner(s), use your imagination and create stories about how these creatures might in some way help solve the earth's problems. Change partners and share your stories.

- ants
- worms
- chickens
- spiders
- dogs
- kangaroos

4. BEYOND REPAIR: Which of these are the biggest problems for Earth? Rate them in order from 1 (smallest problem) to 8 (biggest problem). Change partners and explain your rating. Discuss how we can repair the damage done by each.

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| _____ deforestation | _____ overpopulation |
| _____ dam building | _____ acid rain / smog |
| _____ tourism | _____ hazardous waste |
| _____ over-fishing | _____ other _____ |

5. NATURE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'nature'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

6. QUICK DEBATE: Students A think it's too late for governments and scientists to save the Earth. Students B think the Earth doesn't need saving – it will survive. Debate this with your partners. Change partners often.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. Parrotfish may be the answer in protecting Caribbean coral reefs. T / F
- b. The reefs are in danger of being suffocated by overgrown seaweed. T / F
- c. The out-of-control seaweed is highly poisonous to parrotfish. T / F
- d. The Caribbean coral reefs don't really affect people's incomes. T / F
- e. The biggest danger for parrotfish is people with aquariums. T / F
- f. A professor is optimistic parrotfish numbers can be increased. T / F
- g. Parrotfish are inedible to humans and dangerous if consumed. T / F
- h. The sun bleached the reefs and killed several species of marine life. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. exquisite | a. destructive |
| 2. key | b. air |
| 3. devastating | c. income |
| 4. central | d. susceptible |
| 5. livelihood | e. crucial |
| 6. ensure | f. killing |
| 7. establish | g. answer |
| 8. vulnerable | h. magnificent |
| 9. voice | i. initiate |
| 10. wiping out | j. make certain |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1. One of Earth's most | a. of millions of people |
| 2. This is according | b. for the coral to breathe |
| 3. overgrown seaweed is making it hard | c. concern to the management |
| 4. at serious risk of being | d. vulnerable |
| 5. central to the livelihood | e. damaged beyond repair |
| 6. in order to ensure a | f. of ecosystem success |
| 7. practical steps to protect parrotfish and | g. exquisite creatures |
| 8. parrotfish are particularly | h. future for the reefs |
| 9. voice their | i. to a new report |
| 10. the parrotfish can become a symbol | j. help reef regeneration |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Parrotfish to rescue coral reefs

One of Earth's most _____ creatures, the parrotfish, may be the key to saving the Caribbean's world-famous coral reefs. This is _____ to a new report published in the journal 'Nature'. Report author professor Peter Mumby, a marine _____ from the UK's Exeter University, says overgrown seaweed is making it _____ for the coral to breathe. He found the parrotfish is the only fish that eats the seaweed. However, over-fishing has reduced the numbers of parrotfish, which means the coral is at serious risk of being damaged _____ repair. Mumby said: "The future of some Caribbean reefs is in the _____ and if we carry on the way we are, then reefs will change forever. This will be _____ for the Caribbean's rich marine environment, which is home to a huge range of species as well as being _____ to the livelihood of millions of people."

Professor Mumby says that in order to _____ a future for the reefs, parrotfish need to be protected. These colourful fish are frequently caught in fishing nets and _____ being sold in local markets. Mumby added: "The good news is that we can take _____ steps to protect parrotfish and help reef regeneration. We recommend a change in policy to establish controls over the use of fish traps, which parrotfish are particularly _____ to. We also call on anyone who visits the Caribbean and sees parrotfish on a restaurant menu to _____ their concern to the management." The reefs have been in _____ since the 1980s. Global warming has added to the problem by bleaching coral and _____ other species that fed on the seaweed. Professor Mumby hopes the parrotfish can become a _____ of ecosystem success in the Caribbean.

ecologist
according
beyond
devastating
hard
central
exquisite
balance
vulnerable
symbol
end up
practical
ensure
decline
voice
wiping out

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Parrotfish to rescue coral reefs

One of Earth's _____, the parrotfish, may be the key to saving the Caribbean's world-famous coral reefs. _____ report published in the journal 'Nature'. Report author professor Peter Mumby, a marine ecologist from the UK's Exeter University, says overgrown seaweed _____ coral to breathe. He found the parrotfish is the only fish that eats the seaweed. However, over-fishing _____ parrotfish, which means the coral is at serious risk of _____. Mumby said: "The future of some Caribbean reefs is in the balance and if we carry on the way we are, then reefs will change forever. This will be devastating for the Caribbean's rich marine environment, which is _____ species as well as being _____ millions of people."

Professor Mumby says that in _____ the reefs, parrotfish need to be protected. These colourful fish are frequently caught in fishing nets _____ local markets. Mumby added: "The good news is that we can take practical steps to protect parrotfish and _____. We recommend a change in policy to establish controls over the use of fish traps, which parrotfish _____. We also call on anyone who visits the Caribbean and sees parrotfish on a restaurant menu _____ the management." The reefs have been _____ 1980s. Global warming has added to the problem by bleaching coral and wiping out other species that fed on the seaweed. Professor Mumby hopes the parrotfish can _____ ecosystem success in the Caribbean.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words '**beyond**' and '**repair**'.

beyond	repair
---------------	---------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• key• ecologist• breathe• serious• carry on• central	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ensure• end up• steps• call on• voice• wiping out
--	--

STUDENT MARINE LIFE SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about marine life in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2	STUDENT 3
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What do you know about parrotfish and coral?
- c) How important do you think it is to save the world's coral reefs?
- d) What do you think are the world's most exquisite creatures?
- e) What do you think it's like being a professor who spends his life studying beautiful seas and oceans?
- f) Can you think of other ways to reduce the amount of seaweed and allow the coral to breathe?
- g) What other parts of the world are damaged beyond repair?
- h) Are there any areas of your country that are in the balance ecologically?
- i) Do you think the Caribbean community should be doing more to protect their reefs?



STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Do you think the governments of Caribbean islands should ban the sale of parrotfish?
- c) Would you voice your concerns to the management of a restaurant that had parrotfish on the menu?
- d) Do you know of any other reefs around the world that are in danger?
- e) What do you think the outcome of this story will be?
- f) What damage do you think the sun does to coral?
- g) Do you think the parrotfish would be a good symbol of marine ecosystem success?
- h) What questions would you like to ask Professor Mumby?
- i) Did you like this discussion?

LANGUAGE

CORRECT WORD: Put the correct words from a–d below in the article.

Parrotfish to rescue coral reefs

One of Earth's most (1) _____ creatures, the parrotfish, may be the key to saving the Caribbean's world-famous coral reefs. This is (2) _____ to a new report published in the journal 'Nature'. Report author professor Peter Mumby, a marine ecologist from the UK's Exeter University, says overgrown seaweed is making it (3) _____ for the coral to breathe. He found the parrotfish is the only fish that eats the seaweed. However, over-fishing has reduced the numbers of parrotfish, which means the coral is at (4) _____ risk of being damaged beyond repair. Mumby said: "The future of some Caribbean reefs is in the balance and if we carry (5) _____ the way we are, then reefs will change forever. This will be devastating for the Caribbean's rich marine environment, which is home to a huge range of species as well as being central to the (6) _____ of millions of people."

Professor Mumby says that in (7) _____ to ensure a future for the reefs, parrotfish need to be protected. These colourful fish are frequently caught in fishing nets and end (8) _____ being sold in local markets. Mumby added: "The good news is that we can take practical steps to protect parrotfish and help reef regeneration. We recommend a (9) _____ in policy to establish controls over the use of fish traps, which parrotfish are particularly vulnerable to. We also call (10) _____ anyone who visits the Caribbean and sees parrotfish on a restaurant menu to (11) _____ their concern to the management." The reefs have been in decline since the 1980s. Global warming has added to the problem by bleaching coral and wiping (12) _____ other species that fed on the seaweed. Professor Mumby hopes the parrotfish can become a symbol of ecosystem success in the Caribbean.

- | | | | | |
|-----|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1. | (a) exhausting | (b) quizzed | (c) exquisite | (d) equipped |
| 2. | (a) accord | (b) according | (c) accords | (d) recording |
| 3. | (a) hardest | (b) harden | (c) hardly | (d) hard |
| 4. | (a) serious | (b) seriously | (c) series | (d) serial |
| 5. | (a) on | (b) over | (c) up | (d) in |
| 6. | (a) liveliness | (b) live | (c) lively | (d) livelihood |
| 7. | (a) ask | (b) order | (c) tell | (d) command |
| 8. | (a) on | (b) down | (c) up | (d) of |
| 9. | (a) changing | (b) chance | (c) charge | (d) change |
| 10. | (a) in | (b) up | (c) on | (d) to |
| 11. | (a) sound | (b) voice | (c) speak | (d) speech |
| 12. | (a) out | (b) up | (c) over | (d) with |

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information about parrotfish. Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. OCEANS AND SEAS: Make a poster about oceans and seas. Highlight the problems different oceans and seas are experiencing due to human activity. Show your poster to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all include similar things?

4. MAGAZINE ARTICLE: Write a magazine article about the parrotfish and its role in saving the coral reefs in the Caribbean. Include imaginary interviews with a parrotfish, a tourist and a fisherman.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down new words and expressions.

5. LETTER: Write a letter to Professor Mumby. Ask him three questions about his research. Give him three pieces of advice on what projects he should do in the future. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. T b. T c. F d. F e. F f. T g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| 1. exquisite | a. magnificent |
| 2. key | b. answer / crucial |
| 3. devastating | c. destructive |
| 4. central | d. crucial |
| 5. livelihood | e. income |
| 6. ensure | f. make certain |
| 7. establish | g. initiate |
| 8. vulnerable | h. susceptible |
| 9. voice | i. air |
| 10. wiping out | j. killing |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1. One of Earth's most | a. exquisite creatures |
| 2. This is according | b. to a new report |
| 3. overgrown seaweed is making it hard | c. for the coral to breathe |
| 4. at serious risk of being | d. damaged beyond repair |
| 5. central to the livelihood | e. of millions of people |
| 6. in order to ensure a | f. future for the reefs |
| 7. practical steps to protect parrotfish and | g. help reef regeneration |
| 8. parrotfish are particularly | h. vulnerable |
| 9. voice their | i. concern to the management |
| 10. the parrotfish can become a symbol | j. of ecosystem success |

GAP FILL:

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One of Earth's most **exquisite** creatures, the parrotfish, may be the key to saving the Caribbean's world-famous coral reefs. This is **according** to a new report published in the journal 'Nature'. Report author professor Peter Mumby, a marine **ecologist** from the UK's Exeter University, says overgrown seaweed is making it **hard** for the coral to breathe. He found the parrotfish is the only fish that eats the seaweed. However, over-fishing has reduced the numbers of parrotfish, which means the coral is at serious risk of being damaged **beyond** repair. Mumby said: "The future of some Caribbean reefs is in the **balance** and if we carry on the way we are, then reefs will change forever. This will be **devastating** for the Caribbean's rich marine environment, which is home to a huge range of species as well as being **central** to the livelihood of millions of people."

Professor Mumby says that in order to **ensure** a future for the reefs, parrotfish need to be protected. These colourful fish are frequently caught in fishing nets and **end up** being sold in local markets. Mumby added: "The good news is that we can take **practical** steps to protect parrotfish and help reef regeneration. We recommend a change in policy to establish controls over the **use** of fish traps, which parrotfish are particularly **vulnerable** to. We also call on anyone who visits the Caribbean and sees parrotfish on a restaurant menu to **voice** their concern to the management." The reefs have been in **decline** since the 1980s. Global warming has added to the problem by bleaching coral and **wiping out** other species that fed on the seaweed. Professor Mumby hopes the parrotfish can become a **symbol** of ecosystem success in the Caribbean.

LANGUAGE WORK

1 - c 2 - b 3 - d 4 - a 5 - a 6 - d 7 - b 8 - c 9 - d 10 - c 11 - b 12 - a