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We are losing our coral reefs [1]

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Cited from Special for endi.com [2] "Coral reefs are the richest marine ecosystem in biodiversity and one of the most productive in the Earth, compared with the tropical forests. It provides diverse benefits like food, medicinal products and works as a natural barrier against cyclonal swells and coastal erosion. In addition, is a natural shock absorber to greenhouse gases, contributing to reduce the effects of the global warming. Reefs also attract tourism and are main the economic entrance of many tropical nations. In spite of that, coral reefs have been lost to an unusual speed, in the past three decades, due mainly to diverse factors of human origin." Instead of finding diverse species of fish, like groupers and sharks, and a delicious combination of colors, divers at Los Corchos reef to the south of the island of Culebrita, will find that the corals have become pale, ill or dying, with brown seaweed and a few small and slippery fish that disappear quickly in their presence. "Sedimentation, the excessive concentrations of nutrients and polluting agents, the lack of planning for land use, " over-fishing ", military and excessive recreational activities have contributed to alter the state of coral reefs." These factors of human origin, added to natural factors like hurricanes, diseases and depredation, have proved to be a fatal combination that could inflict irreparable damage to this ecosystem. "By such reason, it is imperative that Puerto Rico reviews and focus its strategies of handling of these ecosystems, to reach an acceptable level of sustainability." An ideal coral reef must be able to sustain itself and to recover after a disturbance; to make this happen Puerto Rico must have a plan of suitable handling that integrates the government and community, but still more important it must educate the population about the importance of the reefs. In Puerto Rico, communities, fishermen organizations and environmentalist organizations interested in the recovery and conservation of the Los Corchos coral reef, have become interested in contributing to the coral reef handling plan in Puerto Rico. Nevertheless, the protection of this important ecosystem concerns us all Puerto Ricans; if we failed in saving our reefs, we would loose a source of economic income, food, medicines, protection against swells and an integral part of our inheritance, culture and means of life.

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