

Vaquita

Among the millions of marine species consisting of thousands to millions of creatures within them, there is only one species with a shocking number of just 10 individuals left in the world, the Vaquitas. The Vaquita species is what you would categorize as an “endangered species”. Like all marine animals, this endangered species has many special benefits for the ocean. They have quite a background, a history of endangerment, and an important purpose that they must play the role for. There are lots of facts to uncover about this species, especially about their endangerment.

Vaquita, translated to “little cow” in Spanish, is a small marine mammal located in the North part of the Gulf of California in Mexico. This unique animal’s appearance is discussed in the article ‘Vaquitas: Endangered Animals Spotlight’ by professional wildlife conservationist, Clara Miguelez. Their appearance contains a unique pattern, colored with multiple shades of black, and a small head, complimented by its long flippers and fins (Miguelez). These features benefit them as they swim through their habitats, similar to how dolphins maneuver with their physical traits. This color scheme is very useful and common for marine animals to possess, using it to their advantage in the water. Vaquitas have adapted these characteristics to move safely in the dangerous oceans.

Endangered species have to try their best to distance themselves from any threats that may speed up the reach to their extinction, which is the exact situation that the remaining 10 Vaquitas are trapped in. The reasoning behind their risk of extinction is driven by one main

factor: people. An article by the World Wildlife organization, titled ‘The Vaquita: 5 Facts About the Most Endangered Marine Mammal’, stated, “Unsustainable and illegal fishing practices are the main drivers pushing Vaquita to extinction, particularly due to bycatch from illegal fishing.” (The Vaquita: 5 Facts About the Most Endangered Marine Mammal). These types of illegal fishing activities done by people are the cause as to why Vaquitas are about to go extinct. This becomes a hazard to them due to the large number of people trying to capture them. Illegal fishing practices have caused Vaquitas to become an endangered species.

In an ecosystem, it is crucial for every animal to play their role, but, what if a species cannot do their part? Well, in simple terms, it would hurt the ecosystem and chaos could spread, which is what could happen without the Vaquitas. They play a large role in the ecosystem, just like every other creature. According to porpoise.org in ‘What Will Happen to the Ecosystem if Vaquitas Go Extinct?’, “The extinction of the Vaquita could disrupt the equilibrium of these predator-prey relationships...”, leading to imbalances in their delicate proportions, causing extreme issues (What Will Happen to the Ecosystem if Vaquitas Go Extinct?). This is especially important to marine life in their natural habitat of the Gulf of California. Vaquitas serve an important purpose in our oceans, like controlling the population of other predatory fishes, which is crucial for other marine life to thrive.

The marine mammal, Vaquita, is the most endangered species with only 10 surviving members but with an important role in maintaining the delicate balance of the marine ecosystem in the Gulf of California. This species may not live long if action is not taken fast. In order to keep such endangered animals surviving, we need to treat these animals’ the same way as we treat human life: with care, urgency, and respect.

Works Cited

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