

## ARTICLE: TEACHER VERSION

### About this Article

**Lexile:** 875      **Wordcount:** 1,176

**Text Complexity:** The Lexile level for this text falls in the middle of the 4-5 CCSS grade complexity band. This text is suitable as a read aloud for students in grades 3 through 5. You should use your professional judgement and knowledge of students' independent reading levels regarding assigning this text for independent reading.

**Note:** You will find a graphic organizer at the end of this text. Its purpose is to provide a tool for students to gather information that they will use to complete the writing task, the culminating activity of the Science and Literacy Activities. Use your professional judgement and knowledge of your students to decide how to facilitate the completion of the graphic organizer. It can be done with the teacher guiding students in note taking, in partners, or independently. It is advisable to assign partners prior to reading so that students are aware of who their partner is for **Think-Pair-Share**.

When the instructions direct you to facilitate **Think-Pair-Share**, listen in and select a student to share out with the whole group.

#### Key for Teacher Notes

- **Green text**  
specific strategies
- Regular text  
instructions for teachers
- *Italicized text*  
teacher's instructions to students
- Underlined text  
important domain-specific words

## Caribbean Island Wildlife: Animals of Cuba

Pack your bags for an exciting journey. We're heading to Cuba, the largest island nation in the Caribbean Sea. Cuba is home to many kinds of animals, and we're going to meet three of them. Each animal lives in a different habitat—a place where a living thing lives and grows. We'll travel across the country and visit forests, wetlands, and a coral reef. Some of these habitats and its animals are in trouble. Along the way, we'll find out how people can help.



**Think-Pair-Share:** *What have you learned about Cuba so far? What more do you expect to learn from reading this article? How does the article define "habitat"?*

Refer to the map and point to where the three habitats mentioned in the above paragraph are located. (You might revisit the map throughout your reading of the article to point out locations of the different habitats that are described.)

**Think Aloud:** *Let's read the subheadings so that we have a preview of the text before we start reading. It is helpful for readers to know what they can expect to learn from a text. Read the subheadings aloud and say that readers can expect to learn about the three types of habitats in the subheadings (along with animals that live in them). You might combine thinking aloud with eliciting students' thoughts. Introduce the graphic organizer for note-taking. Explain to students whether they will take notes independently or with a partner when you prompt them, or as a whole class with you guiding them ("shared writing"). You might vary your approach, perhaps starting out talking as a class, and gradually releasing the task to students as you read on.*

### Lizards of the Forest

Our first stop is Humboldt National Park in the eastern mountains of Cuba. This park stretches for miles across rainforests, pine forests, grasslands, and rivers. It provides a home for many animals, including some found nowhere else on Earth.

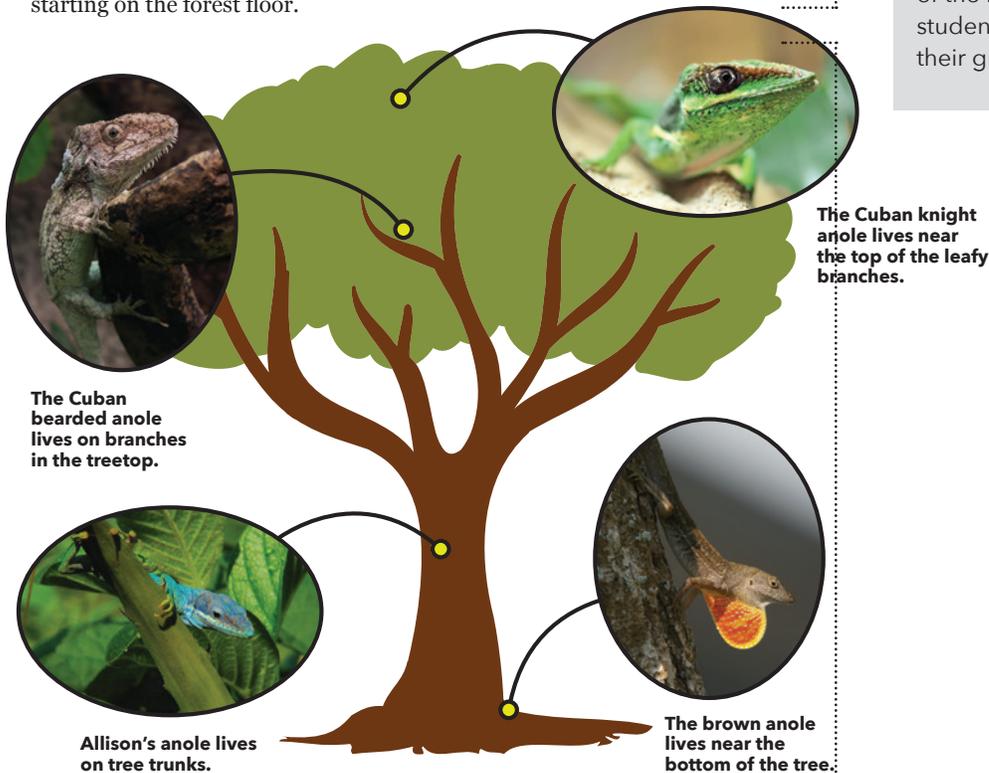


*Visualize all of the different environments listed in the second sentence. You may want to pause briefly for each (rainforest, pine forest, grassland, rivers) and allow students to tell a partner what they see in their minds. What does this make you think about Humboldt National Park? Students should notice that there is a surprising diversity of habitats within one area. This is important because diversity of ecosystems is a distinct feature of Cuba.*

We'll head into the forest in search of lizards called **anoles** that live in and around trees. This forest is home to at least 21 kinds of anoles. Some live high in the treetops. Others live on the moist ground around the trees. Each of these areas is a different habitat. Different kinds of anoles live in each one. Let's meet a few of these lizards, starting on the forest floor.

**Think Aloud:** While we just learned that Humboldt National Park is home to four different habitats, now we know that this section of the article will focus on one: the forest. Let's think about what we know about the forest based on the text.

Prompt students to reread the previous paragraph and **think/pair/share** about features of the forest (high tree tops, moist ground). Ask students to jot notes in the appropriate place on their graphic organizer.



You might find a **brown anole** near the base of a tree trunk. This lizard has long back legs for jumping and sprinting. It moves fast when it spots an insect to eat or a possible mate. But if it sees a predator looking for its next meal, it may stay completely still. When it's not moving, this small, brown anole is camouflaged, blending in with the tree's trunk and branches.

**Allison's anole** lives on tree trunks, especially on palm trees. This lizard has big toe pads that help it cling to the trunk. It can climb straight up (or straight down!) trunks in search of insects.

Up in the treetops, or canopy, a **Cuban bearded anole** scurries between the branches that form the leafy roof of the forest. This anole moves slowly using its short legs to grasp fragile twigs.

Near the top of the canopy, a **Cuban knight anole** is defending its territory. If another animal gets close, it has different ways to say, “Keep out!” It does push-ups and bobs its head up and down. It sticks out a large pink flap under its throat called a dewlap. It also changes color! As the largest anole, it eats more than just insects. It will devour tree frogs, tarantulas, and even birds.

Forests and other ecosystems in the Caribbean are filled with anoles. These lizards are not threatened like some other reptile species. Protected areas like Humboldt National Park help keep them safe.

### Sea Turtle of the Coral Reef

Let’s head to the beach! Our next stop is Gardens of the Queen, a line of tiny islands along southern Cuba. These islands are keys, small islands of coral or sand. We’ll dive into the warm, shallow water to explore the coral reefs. Thousands of kinds of animals make their home among the reefs. It is a colorful community of fish, sea fans, sea sponges, and other ocean life.



Keep an eye out for the **hawksbill sea turtle**. This sea turtle is fast, and has a bright shell. With its narrow head and jaws, the hawksbill can reach food in tiny spaces in the reef. Then it uses its sharp “beak” to rip and chew whatever it finds. It likes to eat squid, shrimp, and especially sea sponges, animals with soft bodies that live among the coral.

**Think Aloud:** *Wow, we just learned about four different species of anoles. Let’s select one to think more about... Can you choose one anole and reread the paragraph that describes it? What information are you getting about the way(s) in which this animal relies on its forest habitat?*

Prompt students to jot notes on the appropriate place in their graphic organizer.

**Think/Pair/Share:** *What does the text (and the picture) tell us about this habitat?*

Prompt students to jot in the appropriate place on their graphic organizer.



The hawksbill is at home around the reef, but this is not its only home. This sea turtle is born on the sandy beach where females bury their eggs. After they hatch, they head for the water. The hatchlings float together in the shelter of seagrass or seaweed. As they grow, hawksbills move among different habitats—from rocky beaches to shallow bays and estuaries, rivers that connect to the sea.



This striking sea turtle is a key part of the coral reef community. But it's also endangered. The hawksbill is hunted for its beautiful shell. People use the shell to make jewelry and combs. Cuba has banned hunters from catching hawksbills, but some people still hunt illegally. Tourism is also putting the hawksbill at risk. Divers, boats, and pollution can damage the coral reefs. As more people visit Cuba, the country will need to continue to protect areas like Gardens of the Queen.

**Think-Pair-Share:** *What does the text (and the picture) tell us about the the sea turtle that lives in the coral reefs? About threats posed to this animal or its habitat?*

Prompt students to jot in the appropriate place on their graphic organizer.



### Crocodile of the Wetlands

Our last stop is the Zapata Peninsula on the southwest coast of Cuba. We'll explore the Zapata Biosphere Reserve, the largest area of wetlands in the Caribbean. Many habitats are found here, from marshes to mangrove forests. These habitats support many kinds of animals, including some birds, bats, rodents, and reptiles that live only in Cuba. That's why we've come here—to spot the rare **Cuban crocodile**. Only a few thousand of these crocodiles are living in the wild, and most of them are in the Zapata wetlands.



**Think-Pair-Share:** What does the text (and the picture) tell us about this habitat?

Prompt students to jot in the appropriate place on their graphic organizer.

The Cuban crocodile prefers freshwater wetlands, which are farther inland than the salty wetlands near the ocean. You might spot this crocodile hunting for food. It can lurk underwater waiting to attack a passing animal. It may even use its strong back legs to jump out of the water and catch an animal in mid-air! With its long, powerful legs, it can also run fast to chase prey on land.



This crocodile is also an attentive parent. Like some other crocodiles, it carries its tiny hatchlings in its mouth or on top of its head to keep them safe in the water.

Unfortunately, the Cuban crocodile is endangered. They are quickly vanishing and someday they could become extinct. Human activities are their biggest threat. People hunt them to make crocodile-skin purses, shoes, and other goods. People also clear wetlands for agriculture and urban development, destroying the crocodile's wetland habitat.

### Working to Protect Cuba's Animals

Today, Cuba's population is growing, and more people are traveling there. Cubans are working to make sure that the growing population doesn't put the island's habitats in greater risk. The government has set up nature preserves like the ones in Humboldt, Gardens of the Queens, and Zapata. Cuban scientists, along with scientists from all over the world, are studying and recording the plants and animals, and are working to protect Cuba's diversity. Because of these efforts, we can keep learning about animals like the anoles, the hawksbill sea turtle, and the Cuban crocodile, and even discover new ones.

**Think-Pair-Share:** What does the text (and the picture) tell us about the Cuban crocodile that lives in the freshwater wetlands? About threats posed to this animal or its habitat?

Prompt students to jot in the appropriate place on their graphic organizer.

**Think-Pair-Share:** Tell your partner something interesting that you learned from the article. What would you like to learn more about?

IMAGE CREDITS: Humboldt National Park, ©AMNH/C.Raxworthy; Brown Anole, ©H.Hillewaert/CC-BY-SA-3.0; tree, dumbmichael/Vecteezy.com; Allison's Anole, ©Lezumbalaberenjena/CC-BY-SA-3.0; Cuban Bearded Anole, ©L.Leszczynski/CC-BY-SA-3.0; Cuban Knight Anole, ©O.Shvadchak/CC-BY-SA-3.0; coral reef, ©J.Brooks/NPS; Hawksbill swimming, ©R.Dirscherl/AGE Fotostock; Hawksbill on beach, ©B.Spragg/CC-BY-SA-3.0; wetlands, ©M.Melissen/CC-BY-SA-3.0; Cuban Crocodile, ©Shutterstock; crocodile jumping, ©T.Quine/CC-BY-SA-3.0.

## ARTICLE

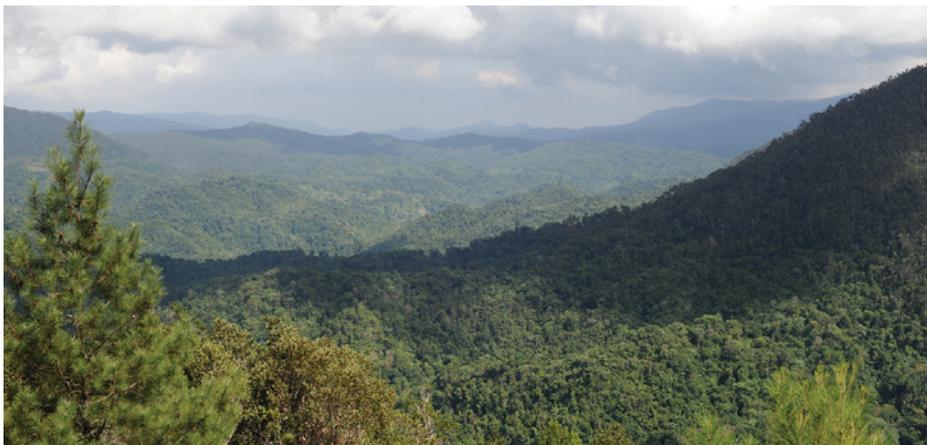
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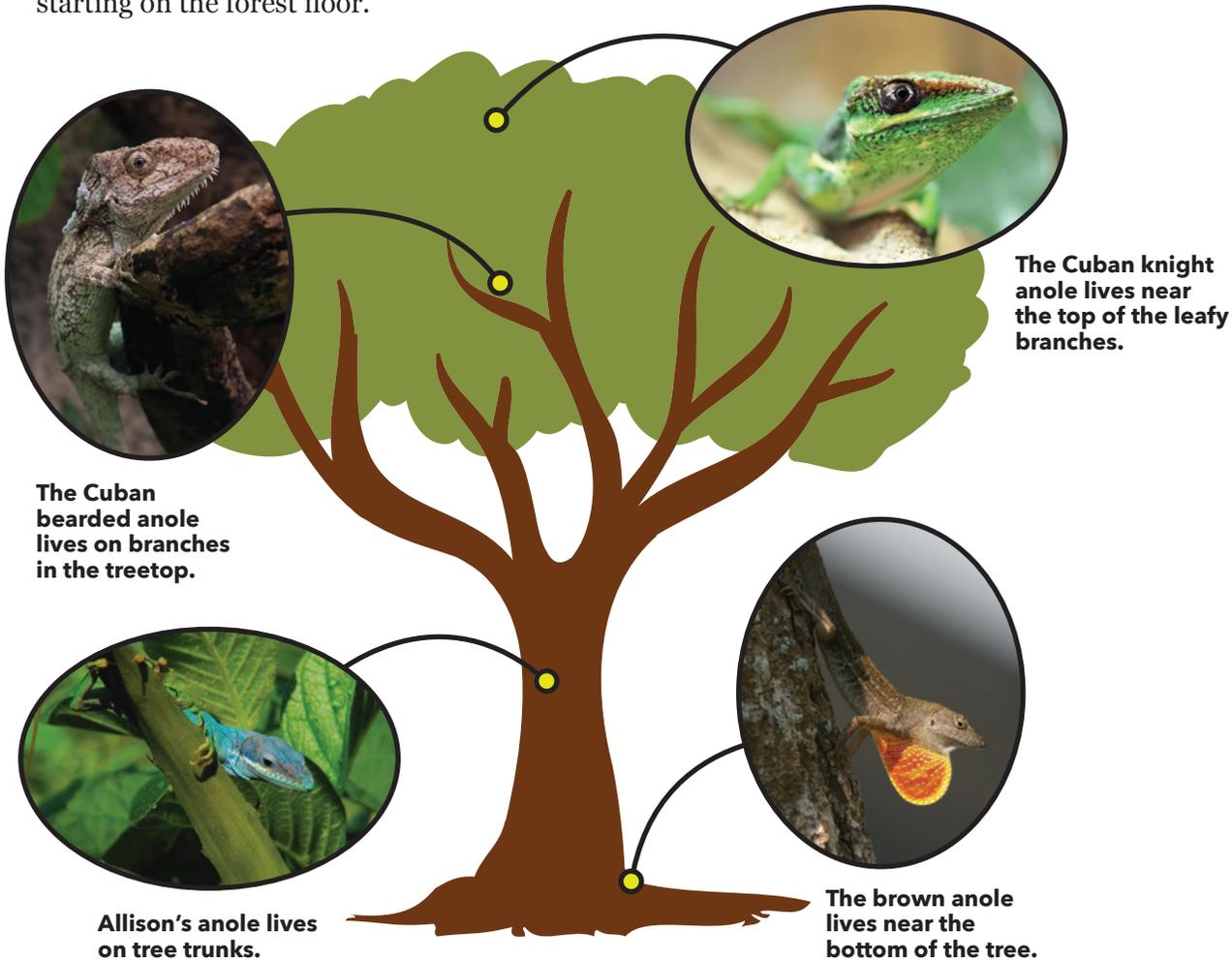


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