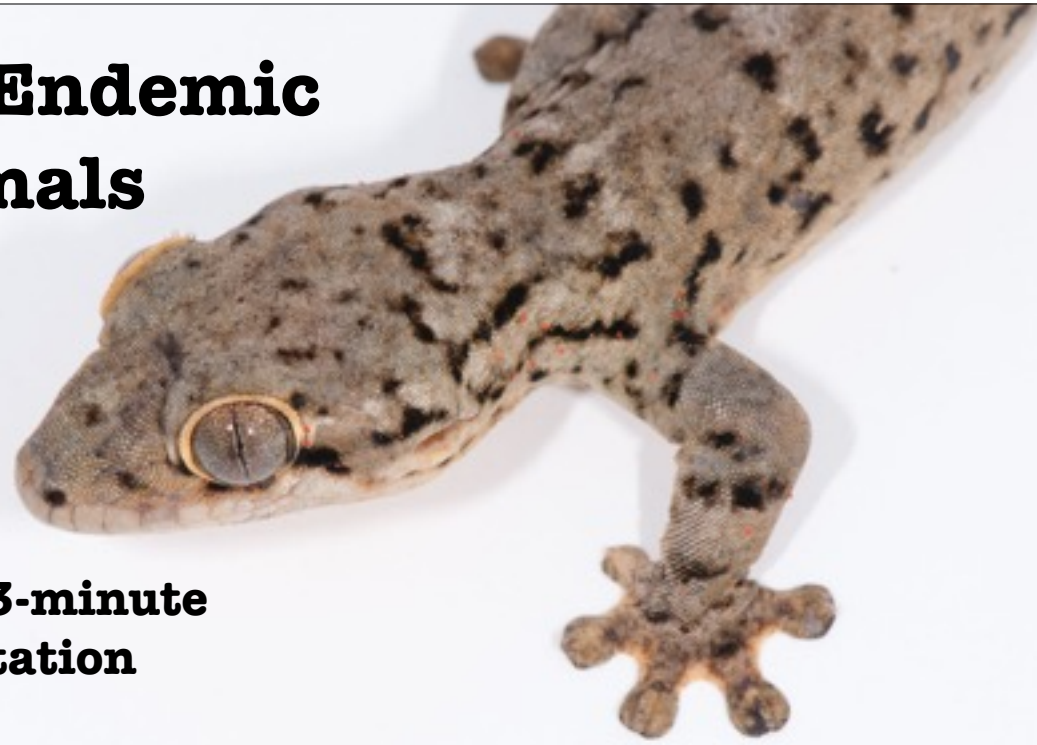


Our Endemic Animals

**A free 3-minute
presentation**



When describing animals, the word endemic generally means native to or restricted to. Animals that are endemic to the Caribbean, for example are only found in the Caribbean.



Endemism is common on islands because they are separated from other land, so animals and plants can evolve unique forms on islands over time. Millions of years ago, St. Martin had no land animals or plants and was just rock.



Over time, it was colonized by various plants and animals, and some of these became endemic species after adapting to the unique conditions here.



In the Caribbean there are different types of endemics. Some species are found only in the Caribbean, or only in the Lesser Antilles. In some cases, unique varieties or subspecies are found only in certain areas.



As you might guess, there are no birds that are found only on St. Martin. Why? Because they can fly, so they can move from island to island. However, many of the birds that don't migrate have evolved distinct species or subspecies in the Caribbean. The Zenaida Dove is one of these.



In fact, a lot of familiar species are in this group, like the Bananaquit, Sucrier or Sugar Bird.



Our two hummingbirds are found only in the Lesser Antilles. This is the Green Throated Carib.



And, as you might have guessed, the Carib Grackle is a Caribbean species. This is the female.



They are found in the Lesser Antilles and parts of northern South America. The male is black.



For animals that can't fly, species can be much more restricted. The Anguilla Bank includes Anguilla, St. Martin, St. Barths and the smaller nearby islands. These islands share many unique species. Why? Because they were connected 12,000 years ago during the last ice age when the sea level was lower.



Many lizards are shared between these three islands, like the Anguilla Bank Anole..



...the Anguilla Bank Ameiva or Ground Lizard...



...and this Dwarf Gecko.



There are even some species that are found only on St. Martin. Some of them may have lived on Anguilla and St. Barths in the past and perhaps only survived here because the island is taller and has certain habitats that may not be on the other islands.



The Spotted Woodslave is found only on St. Martin.



The Bearded Anole is also found only on St. Martin.



This katydid is known only from St. Martin, but could be present but undocumented on other islands.



The same is true of other invertebrates, like this Soapberry Bug, that may be a new species previously unknown to science.



The Soulige Wall Crab Spider was discovered here and named after the Arawak name for St. Martin. Surely many other species are still awaiting discovery here.



**LES FRUITS
DE MER**