

Guantanamo Bay, Not Just a Military Base

When you think of Guantanamo Bay, you don't think of scientific ecological research. In reality, there is a great deal of scientific research taking place on the military base. It began when the base was established in 1903. There is a lot of biodiversity on the military base. Some species of cactus are extremely rare and even extinct outside of the base perimeter. One of the advantages of studying the organisms on the military base at Guantanamo Bay is that the bases acreage has been preserved. It provides an important refuge which resulted in a protected area for habitats of many species of organisms. One species of particular interest is the red land crab (*Gecarcinus ruricola*). This particular crab is host to a fly, *Drosophila endobranhia*, which was discovered in 1966. The fly was never seen again. According to many scientists, the Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay provides an easy place for United States researchers to study the diversity of plants and animals of Cuba.