**Existing Species and Endangered Organisms**

**Table 1. How Many Species Are There?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Groups of Species** | **Number Identified** | **Possible Total** |
| Viruses\* | 5,000 | Perhaps 500,000 |
| Bacteria | 4,000 | 400,000 to 3 million |
| Fungi | 70,000 | 1 to 1.5 million |
| Protozoans | 40,000 | 100,000 to 200,000 |
| Algae | 40,000 | 200,000 to 10 million |
| Plants | 250,000 | 300,000 to 500,000 |
| Vertebrates | 45,000 | 50,000 |
| Roundworms | 15,000 | 500,000 to 1 million |
| Mollusks | 50,000 | 200,000 |
| Crustaceans | 40,000 | 150,000 |
| Spiders. Mites | 75,000 | 750,000 to 1 million |
| Insects | 950,000 | 8 to 100 million |

**\***Viruses are most often not considered “living species,” but have had different types

identified.

**Table 2. Organisms Listed as Endangered in the United States**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Type of Organism** | **Number of Endangered Species** |
| Mammals | 63 |
| Birds | 78 |
| Reptiles | 14 |
| Amphibians | 10 |
| Fishes | 70 |
| Snails | 20 |
| Clams | 61 |
| Crustaceans | 18 |
| Insects | 33 |
| Spiders | 12 |
| Flowering Plants | 565 |
| Conifers | 2 |
| Ferns and other plants | 24 |

1. **Calculating:** According to Table 1, what is the identified species diversity in the biosphere?

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2. **Comparing and Contrasting:** Which group of species listed in Table 1 is the most diverse?

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3. **Using Tables and Graphs:** Which group of species has the highest number on the list of

endangered species in Table 2?

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4. **Analyzing Data:** Using Table 1, compare the Possible Totals for species to the Number

Identified. Make one plausible inference from the information provided.

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5. **Predicting:** After ten years, if conservation efforts are supported to protect entire

ecosystems, how would Table 2 likely change?

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EXTRA CREDIT Research:

A. Find out WHY viruses are not usually called “living species.”

B. Select your favorite type of organism from Table 2 and write a paragraph describing one

species from the endangered list.

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