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Sommario/riassunto	During the vast stretches of early geologic time, the islands of the Caribbean archipelago separated from continental land masses, rose and sank many times, merged with and broke from other land masses, and then by the mid-Cenozoic period settled into the current pattern known today. By the time Native Americans arrived, the islands had developed complex, stable ecosystems. The actions these first colonists took on the landscape-timber clearing, cultivation, animal hunting and domestication, fishing and exploitation of reef species-affected fragile

