
DISAPPEARING BIODIVERSITY

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https://www.123rf.com/photo_15803964_different-animals-collage.html

Recovering our wildlife is an aim for many environmentalists. Our biodiversity has been reducing at an unprecedented rate. For the last 40 years, there has been a decline of 76% freshwater, 39% terrestrial and 39% marine species worldwide, and these numbers are still escalating. This change in an ecosystem or environment is referred to like the term 'Biodiversity Loss'. Biodiversity loss is being addressed by the UN's SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) in the hope to make our home a more sustainable place to live. The main SDGs that are connected to biodiversity loss are :

SDG 13 - CLIMATE ACTION

" Take urgent action and reduce climate change and it's impacts "

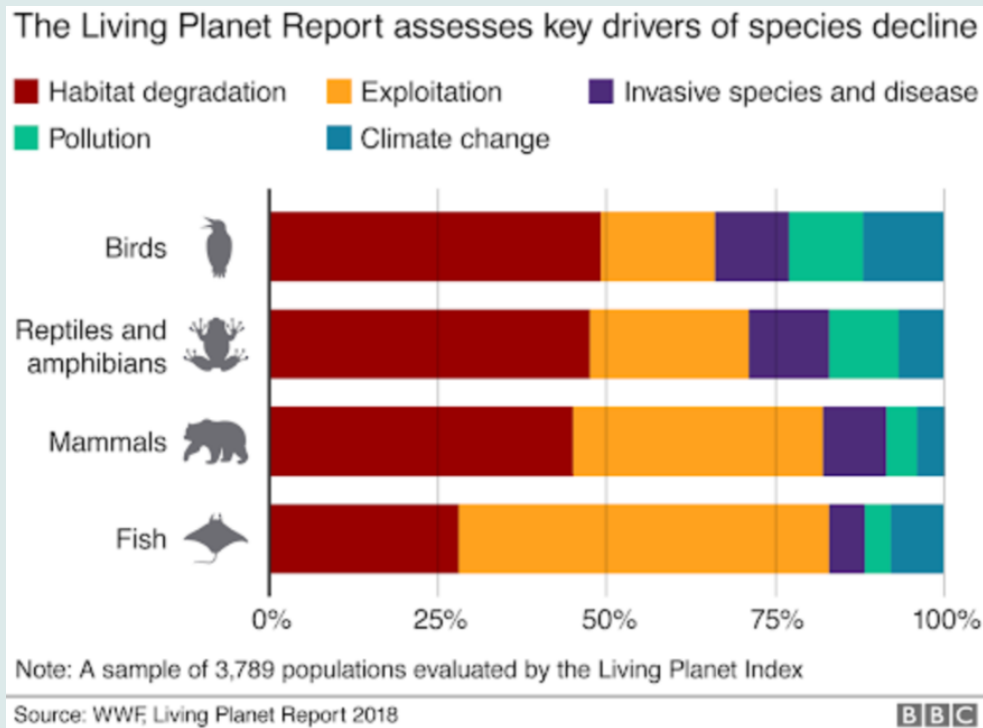
SDG 14 - LIFE BELOW WATER

" Conserve and sustainably use our lakes, oceans, rivers, seas, and marine resources for sustainable living "

SDG 15 - LIFE ON LAND

" Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss "

CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES



https://www.google.com/search?q=living+planet+report+assesses+key+drivers+of+species+decline&safe=strict&rlz=1CAIGZW_enCA881CA881&sxsrf=ALeKk00gfwDZMAyAuyyQTSiNAZtW_NGq6g:1585934101606&source=Inms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewjOul324MzoAhUTG80KHQ7bCvYQ_AUoAnoECAwQBA&biw=1379&bih=711#imgrc=9Z_2eFWPrE_7JM

When it comes to treating our Earth the way it treats us, humans tend to cross the line. Humans are the main contributors to Biodiversity Loss. We cause many beginnings to the downfall in an ecosystem and aren't quick enough to regain it. The 2 categories that can affect biodiversity are *Natural Biodiversity Loss* and *Human Driven Biodiversity Loss*. From the chart above, you can see that animals are affected differently depending on their habitat and classification. However, You rarely see these top 5 naturally occur in the environment, they are all mostly human-driven causes. Habitat degradation is done by clear cutters, companies that make products requiring wood-like pencils or paper, and construction companies that want to make the land a hotel. Pollution is caused by garbage not being properly thrown out which causes a negative effect on animals that may mistake it for food or might get stuck in it. Exploitation is when an animal is overproduced leading another one to extinction. Climate change is melting the ice in the Arctic, changing the climate in areas making animals confused and ill. Lastly, Invasive species are sometimes accidentally brought onto cargo ships and then they make a population in a non-familiar area disturbing the food chain. Biodiversity gives a style of living to humans, and if it is demolished, it can indirectly affect humans' income, local migration, and may even cause political conflict. Furthermore, the wildlife in an area helps scientists in the biological, and medical fields find treatment through biodiversity. Over the years, if it the wildlife gets limited, there will be difficulties to find medical treatments. Like David Suzuki said - *I can't imagine a life without air, water, soil, energy, and biodiversity. These are the things that keep us alive.* If life is continued on like this, scientists say that many enigmas will occur in a short time. Diseases will spread more, studies show that species that have adapted to survive in harsher habitats carry more pathogens and as more ecosystems reduce in size, these animals become more common leading to common disease outbreaks.

PAST EXPERIENCES

Animals being endangered isn't something new to conservationists, but the action taken can leave you amazed. One animal species that have faced hard times is the *American Bison*. It lived in the 'Interior Plains' of America and was a very important part of the ecosystem and food chain. During the American colonization, it was hunted for meat and hides. At the end of the 19th century, this leads to only being about 23 Bison in America. With ambition and effort, conservationists were able to bring back the Bison population and now over 500,000 roam the plains freely.

TAKING THE PATH TO SUCCESS STEP BY STEP

As you can see from the previous paragraph, it is very possible to bring back something that is close to lost. Many people and organizations are making an effort to reduce the rates of species decline worldwide. One of the most recent activists who took this mission into her hands was *Greta Thunberg* a Swedish environmental activist who is only 17 as of this year and took the chance of letting the world know how bad climate change is and how it is affecting everyone. Many campaigns have created websites to provide information and donate, a popular organization is WWF (worldwide fund for nature) who has a great reputation for helping the environment. A small activity is also done by restaurants called *Meatless Mondays* where they don't sell any meat every Monday. Restaurants that participate in this challenge are Subway, Adelina's, Alta Bistro etc. Tree planting events and nature walks happen once a year locally showing us why we should care for nature.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- bike or walk more
- conserve water usage
- Eat local food
- Use renewable energy sources
- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
- Reduce the use of single-use plastic
- Use a reusable water bottle
- Travel less

By doing these simple things, you can help not only reduce biodiversity loss, but also Pollution, your Ecological and Carbon Footprint, etc. Helping our planet little by little, we can fix the hole on our Earth. Like Aristotle said - *The whole is better than the sum of its parts*

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