

Destruction of biodiversity assignment



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Destruction of Biodiversity Why should you care? You should care, because there exists a chain to which all life is linked. Humans stand not apart, and there is no beginning or end. Extinction is like a trickling stream that grows to threaten riverbanks before drowning the world with oceans. We are foolish and naive to assume that our creek can be maintained as we constantly introduce new species into foreign ecosystems, and destroy biodiversity with the detrimental effects of human integration which many environments and habitats simply cannot withstand. Habitat destruction, habitat fragmentation, overkill, invasive species, and secondary effects are five causal factors that account for most extinctions” (Robert M. May 1995). And today, five of five can be attributed to human beings. These factors can begin as snowflakes, transform into snowballs, and become avalanches if they are left unchecked. And this is why you should care. Yes, there are millions, perhaps billions of species. But, there won't be if current trends continue. It is estimated that “ between one third and two thirds of all species” will be lost in the next mass extinction” (David Quammen 1988, 61).

This will greatly limit biodiversity amongst our world's living species. Today there are sanctuaries that have been set aside to protect the diversity of species within an environment. But, little or no thought has been given to the conservation of diversity outside these strictly protected areas (Ramachandra Guha 1995). “ Losses of native diversity cannot only create costly changes in water or nutrient cycling, fire regimes, rainfall, or soil vitality but can also threaten human health” (Yvonne Baskin 1997, 90).

Man is not an island that can stand exempt from these gross changes in biodiversity. How long before we make the world our sanctuary? Extinction has everything to do with human beings. We not only contribute to the extinction of species, but we are in turn affected by these extinctions as well. Human-induced “ habitat fragmentation dooms species by consigning them to small, island-like parcels of habitat surrounded by an ocean of human impact” (David Quammen 1988).

Most modern forms of transportation account for the introduction of many new species into foreign environments. And, this is a major cause of extinction as well. What is it that we are destroying; what hidden treasures yet undiscovered, the cure to cancer, the fountain of youth, and the answers of origin? We don't even know. Humans may well survive the next mass extinction, but there is no doubt this survival will come at the consequence of a great lowering in the quality of life. Besides losing all pharmaceutical and genetic resources that lay hidden within those extinguished species, and all the spiritual and aesthetic values they offered, I foresee unpredictable levels of loss in many physical and biochemical functions that ordinarily come as benefits from diverse, robust ecosystems functions such as cleaning and re-circulating air and water, mitigating droughts and floods, decomposing wastes, controlling erosion, creating new soil, pollinating crops, capturing and transporting nutrients, damping short-term temperature extremes and longer-term fluctuations of climate, restraining outbreaks of pestiferous species, and shielding Earth's surface from the full brunt of ultraviolet radiation” (David Quammen, 1988, 68). Yes, extinction has a lot to do with us. Forests and biodiversity insure the planet with resources needed

to carry out cyclic life processes. The fate of one frog and the introduction of one foreign plant into a new environment can alone interrupt the entire chain of life.

If a species of frog possessed the cure to AIDS, and a species of grass took over the frog's environment causing extinction, would you not agree that a valuable jewel would be lost? Change is not always good. It can be cataclysmic. We are on the eve of the greatest mass extinction of all time. But, we can stop the avalanche and kill the assassin. We are running out of time. Works Cited: 1. May, Robert M. , May 1995. Extinction Rates. Oxford University Press. 2. Quammen, David. 1988. Pg. 57, 61, 68. The Flight of the Iguana: A Sidelong View of Science and Nature; Scribner, 3. Guha, Ramachandra. 1995, Ecology and Equity (with Madhav Gadgil,) Penguin 4. Baskin, Yvonne. 1997. Pg. 90. The Work Of Nature – How The Diversity Of Life Sustains Us, Island Press