

Energy production and biodiversity loss essay examples

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



Energy resources have been one of the primary factors fuelling humanity's unprecedented progress over the past century. However, while there have been countless benefits derived by humanity from the consumption of these resources, there have also been several negative consequences. These have extended to the environment in the form of global warming caused by a rise in carbon emissions and loss of biodiversity. While many have laid the blame for these negative consequences exclusively on oil and other non-renewable resources, an analysis of the five articles provided, shows that it is the addiction to energy which is responsible for these issues rather than any energy source in particular.

The 1980's can be identified as the era, in which abundant energy became the major pre-requisite for economic growth. According to the article " Cheap Oil!," most of the world began to experience a period of economic growth after many years due to a meteoric decrease in oil prices. The effects of economic growth were felt throughout the world (1). While the growth derived from the decrease in oil prices initiated a period of progress, there were also some unintended consequences. In sharp contrast with De Vries statement heralding the end of American oil dependency (" Cheap Oil!" 4) America and the world's addiction to energy intensified during this period and much of the emphasis on efficiency and a sustainability began to be ignored.

While the events of the 1980's managed to trigger a period of remarkable growth over the next two decades, it also managed to create an international economy wholly dependent on cheap energy and this resulted

in disastrous consequences for the environment, even after oil prices began to increase to unprecedented levels. The sharp rise in oil prices, in the early 21st century culminated with an effort to cultivate renewable and supposedly environmentally friendly sources of energy. These supposedly greener sources of fuel have had the effect of increasing carbon emissions instead of reducing them, due to the destruction of forestry as well as the increased use of tractors used for plowing fields. There has also been a subsequent rise in the prices of grain and other food supplies due to the loss of land used for food cultivation (Grunwald 2).

Another side effect of this oil fuelled era of growth and prosperity was that the culture of consumption (along with its inherent disregard for the environment) managed to trickle down to the poorest regions of the world, many of which hosted sizeable amounts of forestry and a biologically diverse environment. According to McCarthy wild regions are constantly being encroached upon and there has been a significant loss in biodiversity (1). The effect of this loss of biodiversity , according to a study conducted by the University of Michigan is equal to that of other major environmental issues such as climate change and pollution (“ Ecosystem Effects of Biodiversity Loss Could Rival Impacts of Climate Change , Pollution” 2). This is an issue that is sure to compound the growing environmental woes of the world as according to an study on wildlife reserves “ Around half of the reserves are experiencing a severe loss of biodiversity” (“ Protect and Serve” 2).

Works Cited

" Cheap Oil!.' Time. n. p. , 14 Apr. 1986. Web. 29 Jul 2012.

Grunwald, Michael 27. " The Clean Energy Scam". Time. n. p. Mar. 2008.

Web. 29 Jul 2012.

McCarthy, Terry. " Let Them Run Wild". Time. n. p. 26 Aug. 2002. Web. 29 Jul 2012.

" Protect and Serve." (26 Jul. 2012). Nature 487 (2012): 405-406. Web. 29 Jul 2012.

University of Michigan. " Ecosystem effects of biodiversity loss could rival impacts of climate change, pollution." ScienceDaily. n. p. 2 May. 2012. Web. 29 Jul 2012.