

Seven Reasons to Protect Biodiversity

- Biodiversity belongs.*** Biodiversity can be beautiful and can give us aesthetic pleasure: we like seeing wild animals, strange plants, or pretty flowers. *All* humans have a right to exist; shouldn't *all* animals and plants have the same right? We are all products of a complex, miraculous system that created life on earth. Humans should respect other forms of life and make sure our actions don't destroy them.
- Biodiversity helps us heal ourselves*** Many animals and plants may hold the key to some marvelous new invention or medicine. For example, willow trees gave us Acetylsalicylic acid, or ASA, the active ingredient in Aspirin. How many people use Echinacea to stop colds?
- Biodiversity keeps natural areas together.*** The loss of animals or plants from an ecosystem affects other species in the food chain – breaking up the natural functions of the ecosystem. This may eventually lead to negative impacts on surrounding natural areas and to the human population.
- Biodiversity attracts tourists.*** Ecotourism, when done sustainably, may well be the best hope for the survival of protected areas, as it offers a positive economic argument for the preservation of nature.
- Biodiversity helps life to continue on earth.*** The more species there are, the more adaptability there will be to changing conditions like global climate change. There were little warm-blooded rat-like mammals scurrying around at the time of the dinosaurs; this diversity may have contributed to their survival while all the dinosaurs became extinct. Evolutionary expansion or 'radiant evolution' into the vacant niches left by the dinosaurs allowed mammal biodiversity to soar.
- Biodiversity gives us food.*** Since humans need a variety of different plants and animals to breed crops and animals suitable for use on farms, a decrease in biodiversity means that scientists have fewer species to choose from when they try to develop new food sources. For example, when a fungus wiped out 15% of the American corn crop in 1970, biologists bred resistant hybrids from a species of Mexican wild corn. The loss of animals or plants from an ecosystem will affect other species in the food chain, which may in turn affect humans.
- Biodiversity helps us preserve OUR diversity.*** The large number of human cultures that exist, complete with their own languages and customs, add to the diversity of the human experience and enrich us as a species. The loss of biodiversity threatens these cultures, particularly Indigenous peoples that live close to nature.