



RICHMONDTIMES > Upper-Secondary

Biodiversity Battle

The rush is on to save humanity!

1 Pre-reading.

Match the animals to the pictures (a-f). Which of these animals are endangered?

a



b



c



d



e



f



Polar Bear

Tiger

Shark

Orangutan

Sloth

Chimpanzee

2 Reading I

What do you think “biodiversity” means? Why is it so important to us? Discuss with a partner. Then, read the article to check your ideas.

3 Reading II

Read the article again and answer the questions.

1. What arguments does the writer present in favour of preserving biodiversity?
2. What two examples are given of things that can be done to stop the destruction of biodiversity?

4 Discussion

1. How important do you think biodiversity is? Why?
2. Which species from your country are in danger?
3. What can be done to protect the world’s biodiversity?

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Clean air. Clean water. Clean soil. All these things exist thanks to biodiversity. But biodiversity is in danger.

Biodiversity refers to the variety of plants, animals and other living things which are all interconnected. For example, in any forest there are lots of birds, trees, insects and animals. They're all dependent on one another, and all connected, creating unique ecosystems.

The ecological "services" provided by biodiversity are vital to everyday life:

- The air we breathe is a product of photosynthesis by green plants.
- Insects, worms and bacteria break down waste and enrich soils.
- Tiny organisms clean the water in rivers and seas.

In fact, all life on earth exists thanks to biodiversity. More than 90 percent of the calories we consume worldwide are produced from 80 plant species. And 30 percent of medicines are developed from plants and animals. Maintaining a wide diversity of species in each ecosystem is necessary to preserve all living things.

But biodiversity is under threat. Forests are cut down. Land is used for buildings. And animals and plant species are destroyed. All this is leading to a loss of biodiversity. And this is extremely dangerous for the planet. Without clean air, clean water and clean soil, we can't survive! So, what can we do? The problem is that the concept of biodiversity is a bit vague. It's easy to get people concerned about polar bears, but it's harder to get them interested in protecting microscopic sea creatures. However, when we destroy these creatures, it has an effect on the fish in the sea, which in turn affects other marine life, and, ultimately, humans.

But it isn't all bad news. Some organisations are trying to stop the loss of biodiversity. For example, the *Guardian* newspaper has launched the "Biodiversity 100" campaign to try to convince governments around the world to take action. Some of their proposals include persuading the UK government to create a series of marine reserves to stop the decline in sea life caused by industrial fishing. Other initiatives include protecting sharks at sea by some countries who kill them for their fins.

There's a lot to do. And we'd better be quick if we don't want to end up with a planet we can't live on!