

ISSUE DESCRIPTION

COMMITTEE United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
ISSUE Emphasizing the Significance of Safeguarding Endangered Species
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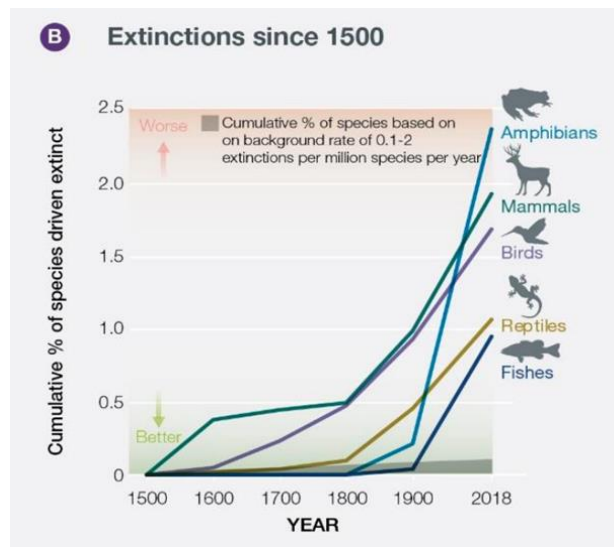
Introduction

Our world is composed of numerous wonderful creatures that together create the wildlife of our planet. Plants and animals are essential for Earth to function therefore it is crucial to shelter these lives. The IUCN calculated that 1,562,663 discovered species are living currently on our planet, however, many others are yet undiscovered. The WWF states that 5,416 are mammals, 16,000 are mushrooms or fungi, 29,300 are fish, 950,000 are insects and 287,655 are plants. Despite the huge numbers, people have great reasons to be worried. These numbers are decreasing as the years pass by.

The IUCN maintains a red list, which lists 16,118 species to be endangered. The species on this red list are at risk of extinction, however, this risk has different stages. The levels of endangerment are: extinct, extinct in the wild, critically endangered, endangered, vulnerable, threatened, near threatened, least concern, (domesticated).



In the past decade, 467 species were declared to have gone extinct (out of which 21 died out in 2023) according to the IUCN, and this number shows an increasing trend unless some serious steps are taken. The following infographic shows the rate of extinction from the 15th century distributed among the members of the animal kingdom:



Definition of Key Terms

Extinction - The process, when a species disappears from Earth, they no longer exist

Endangered species - A species of plant or animal seriously at the risk of extinction.

Fauna - All of the animal life at a given time in a given area.

Flora- The corresponding term of fauna.

Nature - All the living and non-living things in the world exist independently of humans.

Species - A group of living organisms consisting of similar individuals capable of exchanging genes or interbreeding.

State wildlife action plans - It aims to conserve the animals at risk and prevent them from extinction.

General Overview

The change of the fauna has always been part of our world. Some new species evolved, and some species became extinct. However, ever since humans started to develop technologically, the rate of extinction began to increase rapidly. The main reasons are the following:

LOSS OF HABITAT

As human civilization expands into the wild, we take away the territories of certain species, so we come into closer contact with nature. It is dangerous for both parties because

- I. Among animals many disease-spreading pathogens occur and jump onto humans, causing infectious diseases that originally circulated only among animals.
- II. By interfering with nature, the ecological balance which has a great role in the planet's oxygen and water supplies and nutrient cycles, the food chain is likely to unravel resulting in the species eventually being unable to work together to pollinate, nourish, and ultimately sustain all of the plants and animals we consume.

OVER-EXPLOITATION OF WILDLIFE FOR COMMERCIAL AND CONSUMER PURPOSES

The bodies of animals contain many useful products which are valuable for humans. Fur, hide, and wool are mostly used in the fashion industry, these items are considered luxurious so they can be sold at high prices. For this reason, poachers continue their illegal activities with great enthusiasm. Bones and tusks are used in multiple areas like condiments, health-care products, nourishment, animal feeds, and industrial raw materials but it is not rare to see them in the medicine industry and fertilizer for crops.

DISEASES

It is unusual for a disease to wipe out species alone, however, if the groundwork was laid by starvation, habitat loss, and lack of genetic diversity along with the other causes, then the lethal virus or pathogen easily wipes out whole species.

LACK OF GENETIC DIVERSITY

As the number of individuals decreases, the number of potential mating partners lessens as well. The risk of the phenomenon of „inbreeding” increases, causing the transmission of undesirable traits such as fatal diseases.

CLIMATE CHANGE

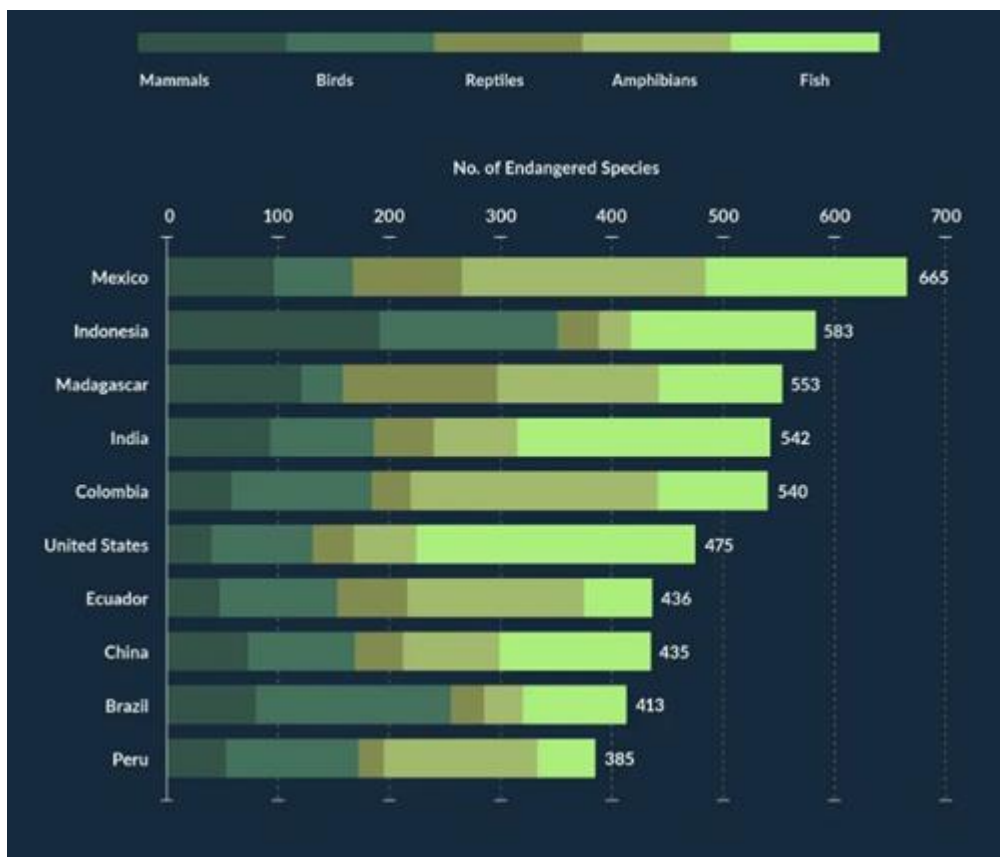
Climate change has major effects on the terrestrial animals and the fauna of the water. Taking the Ice Age as an example, the megafauna were unable to adapt to the change in climate and due to the lack of food and the hunting of the early humans, they rapidly disappeared. Climate change results in insufficiency in territories and food, therefore many species are forced to live more closely resulting in fights for the mentioned needs.

LACK OF FOOD

When faced with a lack of food, it can lead to mass starvation and ultimately extinction. This is because the scarcity of nourishment not only leads to the extinction of one species but also causes a domino effect that can collapse the entire food chain.

POLLUTION

The major party affected by this issue is marine life. The severe loss of oxygen -which is a result of oil pollution- can suffocate entire species. Not to mention the diseases, the physical disabilities, and the decreasing food supplies and territories, all caused by the plastic pollution in our waters.



Major Parties Involved

IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature): The global authority of the natural world and measures safeguarding its values since 1948. IUCN works to develop provisions that aim to support efficient conservation methods and assist sites to achieve exceptional standards, while also informing professional capacity development and influencing national and global policy. This international organisation is at the forefront of the global fight to save endangered animals from extinction.

IUCN Red List of Threatened Species: Founded in 1964, the IUCN's Red List of Threatened Species has evolved into the most reliable source on the global extinction of animals, plants and fungi on the planet. The most critical indicator of the health of the planet's biodiversity.

WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature): Established in 1961, this Swiss-based international, non-governmental organisation aims to transform markets and policies toward sustainability, while tackling the threats driving the climate crisis, protecting, and restoring wildlife and their habitats.

United Mexican States: Habitat loss, illegal wildlife trade, poaching acidification of the ocean, and water pollution threaten the flora and fauna.

Republic of Indonesia: Deforestation leading to habitat loss is the main factor of animal extinction.

Republic of Madagascar: Illegal wildlife trade, huge deforestation and forest degradation are the reason behind the high numbers.

Republic of India: Poaching, illegal wildlife trade, overhunting, deforestation, and pollution are great dangers for wildlife.

Republic of Colombia: Illegal trade and hunting, unsustainable land use, major agro-industrial initiatives and pollution endanger wildlife creatures.

United States of America: Habitat loss/changes, over-exploitation for commercial purposes, introduction of harmful nonnative species, pollution, and disease spread are key factors driving higher extinction rates.

Republic of Ecuador: Oil exploitation, water pollution, and deforestation are the reasons for such high numbers.

People's Republic of China: Recreational killing, poaching, civil unrest, and habitat destruction contribute to the expanding lists of endangered and nearly extinct species worldwide.

Federative Republic of Brazil: Desertification, climate change and deforestation lead to the continuing extinction of wildlife.

Republic of Peru: Many animals are in danger because of wildlife trafficking and indiscriminate deforestation.

Possible Solutions and Approaches

The National Wildlife Federation states that one of the best ways to prevent extinction is to avoid any decline and deterioration in animal populations. They also believe that the conservation of the number of individuals is the key for this issue such as the State Wildlife Action Plans.

The proper attention-raising campaigns for climate change would bring forward a change in the current situation.

More and more countries are introducing fine systems, which forbid and punish any violations of the endangered species regardless being animal or plant.

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