

## **Thousands of scientists beg to differ: Don't give up on biodiversity**

*"A very Faustian choice is upon us: whether to accept our corrosive and risky behavior as the unavoidable price of population and economic growth, or to take stock of ourselves and search for a new environmental ethic."*

— Edward O. Wilson (Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge, 1998)

We, a group of over 3000 concerned scientists and citizens from over 80 countries, fundamentally disagree with R.A. Pyron's [Perspective](#) published on November 22. The views expressed in his article are at odds with scientific facts and our moral responsibility.

We cannot condone actions that lead to our children and grandchildren only knowing rhinoceroses, gorillas, and polar bears from picture books. This outcome is not inevitable: it is preventable.

Yes, extinction is natural. However, the scale on which it is occurring is not. Today, species are disappearing up to 1000 times faster than pre-human rates. This is *not* compensated for by the rate at which new species evolve: there may be no immediate replacements.

It is dangerous to think that we are "no better or worse" without a large proportion of the species alive today. Biodiversity has extensive unknown and untapped potential. No one would have argued for the conservation of a simple fungus 100 years ago, yet today who among us would argue against the value of penicillin?

We urge all readers to think critically about the values of maintaining Earth's rich diversity of life for us, for our future, and simply for itself.

**Alexandre Antonelli and Allison Perrigo, on behalf of 3000+ signatories**

A full list of authors can be found at <http://xxx>

New signatures are welcome at <http://antonelli-lab.net/biodiversity-petition>