

## The most important current threats to biodiversity

Although biodiversity is very important for human well-being, research studies carry out that the variety in species poses major threats. In this paragraph, some of these studies are cited, and specific examples are given. First of all, many animals and plants die due to habitat destruction. By building cities on farmland, nearly half of the prime main agricultural land in California is eliminated; by clearing forests for timber, large areas of the Brazilian rainforest are destroyed (Harris 2002; Pearce & Williams 2008). In addition, the over-exploitation of species can cause elimination. In Newfoundland, Canada, for example, the local ecosystem changed considerably, because the cod disappeared in the 20th century, due to intense overfishing (Chen et al. 2009). Furthermore, climate change causes higher temperatures, which can kill animal and plant species. Akin (2010) argued that hibernating animals may wake early because of warmth, but starve in the absence of food. Finally, pollution threatens biodiversity. For example, Pearce & Williams (2008) investigated the Amoco Cadiz case. This very large crude carrier ran aground on Portsall Rocks, France, in 1978, and split in three. About 0.25 million tonnes of crude oil were spilled, resulting in enormous damage to the environment. In addition, environmental pollution is caused by the widespread use of pesticides on farmland. For instance, Chen et al. (2009) claimed that vultures take up pesticides from grass via dead cows, resulting in a considerable decline of this population in India. Hence, the threats, stated above, have serious consequences for the biodiversity in certain regions.

Word count: 254 words. WA2, Thea Vuik, 863037