

Introduction

Biodiversity plays a vital role in supporting healthy ecosystems that provide human civilization with critical resources and services, such as oxygen, sustenance, clean water, productive soil, medicinal discoveries, shelter, protection against natural disasters, climate regulation, and opportunities for recreation (Cho, 2011). However, the accelerated and excessive consumption patterns of modern society are catastrophically driving species extinction at 1,000 times higher rates than natural background levels. The core driver behind biodiversity loss is unsustainable use of natural resources. By collectively reducing our material consumption whenever possible and ensuring that the resources we do use are sourced and managed carefully and responsibly, we can help conserve remaining biodiversity and allow ecosystems a chance to recover to more stable conditions.

What kind of labels are listed here? Why?

The labels listed on the website denote companies that actively support and protect biodiversity. These labels provide valuable information to consumers about which products are produced sustainably without damaging the natural environment. According to the Earth Institute at Columbia University, these are the most trusted eco-labels.

How do your consumer (buying) choices affect biodiversity?

Consumer purchasing choices can significantly impact biodiversity. Through the forces of supply and demand, consumers can influence companies to continue or halt production of certain items. In my opinion, if the public demands a product, that overrides a company's environmental concerns. This imposes a great risk on global biodiversity. However, biodiversity can benefit if consumers purchase a wider variety of products rather than heavily consuming one type of item.

For instance, eating a diversity of fish helps prevent overfishing of a single species. Humanity depends on biodiversity for energy, weather security, food, and in countless other ways (Mandeville 2019). So, consumer decisions do affect biodiversity, whether directly or indirectly, such as choosing store-bought vegetables rather than homegrown.

Pick one of these methods that you feel would be usable in YOUR city/village/town. How?

Explain.

One solution is Rainforest Alliance certification. Florida's hot, humid climate makes water conservation vital to sustain wildlife, ensure clean water supplies, protect forests and farmland. Rainforest Alliance helps farmers increase yields and reduce costs. Since much of Florida consists of rainforest, preserving this ecosystem is crucial.

One or two sentences or your own personal reflection on something you learned this week.

I found the research on the nitrogen cycle fascinating yet unsettling. This was new territory for me, as I only knew the basics. It was disturbing to learn about the factors disrupting this cycle and the lack of urgency around taking personal steps to mitigate the problems. Humans can be ignorant sometimes.

How is the class going so far for you?

I feel the pace of the course is moderate and manageable. In a relatively short time span, I have absorbed a significant amount of new information and knowledge. The assigned readings comprise a substantial volume of material, but I have been able to get through them. I find the discussion forum to be an engaging component of the class, as it provides me the opportunity to gain insight into the subject matter from classmates' diverse standpoints and opinions. Overall, I

am finding the content we're covering to be interesting and worthwhile as I progress through the course.

References:

Mandeville, C. (2019). Supermarket Science: How Consumer Choices Could Affect Ocean Biodiversity. Ecology For The Masses.

<https://ecologyforthemasses.com/2019/07/11/supermarket-science-how-consumer-choices-could-affect-ocean-biodiversity/>

Cho, R. (2011). What You Can Do to Protect Biodiversity. Blogs.ei.columbia.edu.

<http://blogs.ei.columbia.edu/2011/04/30/what-you-can-do-to-protect-biodiversity>

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