

Dylan Simpson

Username: dsimp10

Dwsimpson10@gmail.com

Illinois Central College

Biodiversity is everywhere, it is in every aspect of life. All species are interconnected, depending on each other. When invasive species or another source comes in or goes, everything changes. We are currently losing species before we know what their impact is or who they even are. When biodiversity is gone, and species become extinct, there is no way to undo it.

The loss of biodiversity can be detrimental to survival of different animals and plants. Whole ecosystems could go to waste. We almost saw this in Yellowstone National Park. Wolves had been absent for 70 years, and since deer had nothing to hunt them, their population skyrocketed. These deer ate almost all the vegetation, leaving virtually nothing. With no vegetation, the soil started to erode. This caused trees and other plants to die. With no set root system in the soil, water banks started to collapse. This is a great example about how losing one species in an ecosystem can cause the downfall of it. Luckily, wolves were reintroduced into the park in the 1990s. Since then, they have gotten the deer population back in check. Deer started staying away from the areas where they were easily tracked and those areas were able to regenerate with vegetation. When the trees started to come back, so did birds and the beavers. The beavers built dams and then otters and other aquatic life returned to the area. Coyotes and bears came back to the area as well. They ate the wolf's leftovers and the berries on the trees. With set root systems and less soil erosion, the riverways became more fixed in their course.

Wolves are a keystone species in Yellowstone. Everything changed when they left and when they were reintroduced.

The wolves in Yellowstone National Park are what mobilizes me. Who knows what our keystone species is. We don't know how much biodiversity the planet can lose without prompting widespread ecological collapse. Everything went to ruin with the absence of the wolves. Luckily, they were able to be reintroduced, but what if the human race loses their own keystone species? We won't be able to reintroduce a species that we make extinct. One of the articles said that if we lose the insects, then everything is going to collapse. Yellowstone wasn't sustainable without wolves, what if earth isn't sustainable without insects? This is what mobilizes me. Human life faces extinction from the lack of biodiversity, and we have no clue what our keystone species is. We are risking life as we know it, for personal gain. We hunt for trophy, we deforest more land than we need, we are killing and making species go extinct at a higher rate than ever before.

New Resources

Human, Sustainable. "How Wolves Change Rivers." YouTube, YouTube, 13 Feb. 2014, www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=254&v=ysa5OBhXz-Q.

"Wolves." National Parks Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, www.nps.gov/yell/learn/nature/wolves.htm.