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The criticality of biodiversity: Importance, status and possible solutions

Biodiversity and the current extinction crisis seem to be little recognized and publicized outside of academic circles and the biological community. There is a larger awareness of climate change, pollution, over-population, and environmental compliance; however, all of these things are the root causes of the greater threat facing the Earth and humanity, which is global mass extinction. The reasons for this are many, but the pervading ignorance of the severity of the situation, political denial and the general feeling of hopelessness as individuals in terms of what can be done to help or reverse the current global extinction crises are what I believe to be the main contributing factors. This must, and can be, reversed. As biologists, professionals in related environmental professions, we live with this knowledge on a daily basis, and it does negatively affect us. There are disorders published in psychological journals that have been identified as unique to environmental professionals. Because of the higher awareness, and “front-line” experiences we face daily while doing our jobs, many, if not most of us, have developed a sense of fatalism and hopelessness. Even if we are not fully aware that we carry this burden, many biologists suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression, anger, and a sense of hopelessness. Yet we rise every day and continue with our calling, which is to protect, conserve and seek solutions to preserve the flora, fauna, and habitats of our dying planet. Despite the sense of doom and gloom, there is some good news and simple things that each of us, including the vast majority of the world’s population, can do to reverse the dire situation facing us and future generation.

First of all, each and every one of us who are environmental professionals, must project more of a positive image of ourselves, our work and the reasons we do what we do. Secondly, each of us must become ambassadors and educate people we encounter whether they be construction workers, politicians, neighbours, school children, and any other member of the general public that do not share our awareness and concern about the importance of Biodiversity and the ongoing crisis of global extinctions. We must explain in simple terms what Biodiversity is, and its importance, We need to share stories and give statistics and examples. Thirdly, we must convince everyone, that each individual can contribute and significantly do something about the situation. We must educate people that every life form is a rivet in the airplane on which we are passengers. As more and more rivets are removed (species going extinct), eventually the plane is going to crash and take everyone on board to their deaths (Paul Ehrlich, Population Biology).

Biography

Bruce D Eilerts is the Biological Resources Manager for The Sanberg Group, Inc. and heads the company’s Las Vegas, Nevada office. He is a natural resources manager/wildlife biologist/environmental planner with over 31 years of experience as an environmental professional and is the company’s Lead Biologist. Mr. Eilerts experience includes Arizona Department of Transportation, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy, Center for BioDiversity, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Idaho Department of Fish and Game. He has an extensive experience working with: wildlife research and management; endangered species; resident, tropical and neo-tropical migratory birds; desert, montane, wetland, marine and island ecosystems; alien and invasive species; biodiversity; land management; wetlands identification, delineation and restoration (COE certified); wildlife connectivity; unique flora, fauna and habitats in diverse geographic locations. Additionally, Mr. Eilerts has served as: the co-chair of the Arizona Wildlife Linkages Steering Committee; co-chair of the Western Governors Association, Transportation Committee; and has been a speaker, provided classes, briefings and presentations at various conferences, symposiums, and academic institutions. He has advised elements at the Pentagon, Office of the Secretary of the Interior, the Governor of Arizona, and the Republic of Mexico’s Minister of Interior. He is also the co-discoverer and co-author of a recent paper describing the Bryan’s Shearwater, a new species of seabird.

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