

Biodiversity and Endangered Species: Issues of Significance

Michael Campbell*

Lakehead University, Ontario, Canada

Biodiversity, endangered species and conservation policy are globally relevant, biological, geographical, socio-economic and political topics involving the global media, scientists and the wider academic, policy and practitioner communities [1,2]. Issues relevant to biodiversity include deforestation, global warming, urban growth, conservation, sustainable development and green/brown issue conflicts [3,4]. Contrasts emerge between the dominant topics relevant to the North (the industrialized nations of North America, Europe and Asia) and the South (the so-called developing countries of South America, Africa and Asia). Issues of greatest interest in the north include environmental movements, suburban landscape change, post industrialism and the socio-environmental significance of the mass consumerist culture [5]. In contrast, issues of concern to the South include deforestation, desertification, soil erosion, population growth and urban expansion, and the associated socio-environmental impacts of famine, poverty, social upheavals and national stability [6].

Recent developments in ecology have sought to incorporate these issues. One focus is the increased attention to integrated environmental history, with offshoots towards human livelihoods, biogeography and political ecology [6-8]. There is also a greater attention to scale, structure, agency, allowing the documentation of nonlinear interactions and their contribution to the creation of patterns at small and large scales [1,5,9].

Some of these studies might be termed multidisciplinary or hybrid methodologies - the main strength of biodiversity studies - incorporating data and research methods from the documentation of economic, political, social change, as well as environmental dynamics. Topics include *agricultural change* [9-13] *soils management* [14] *livestock and rangelands* [15-17] *mountain systems* [8] *national parks and wildlife issues* [2,18] and *water management* [19-21]. The combination of these subjects appears daunting, but comprises the basis upon which a viable biodiversity study must be based.

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*Corresponding author: Michael Campbell, Lakehead University, Ontario, Canada, Tel: 250 220 3434; E-mail: ecol55@hotmail.com

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