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Forum: GC3

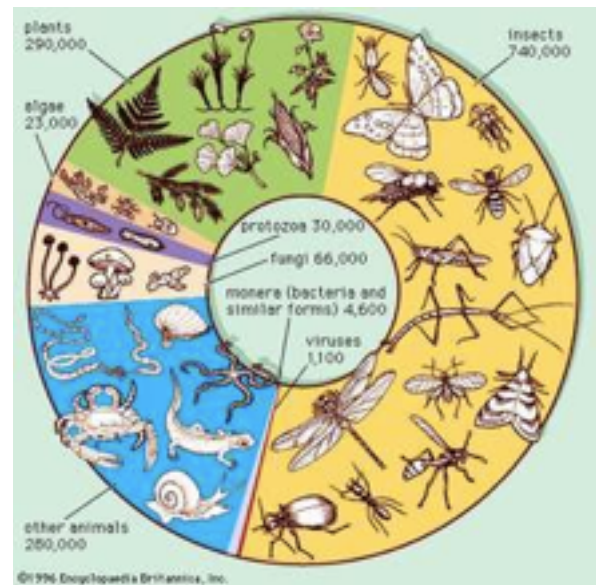
Issue: Mitigating the exploitation of certain species for economic gain and its harmful effects on the ecosystem

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Introduction

Since the humankind explored how to use nature for its own benefits, we have to face millions of detrimental consequences every day. Money has always been one of the most important factors of human life and development, but the exploitation of nature has come to the point that many species go extinct every day. If we don't stop this fast deterioration soon, the results will be impossible to handle and even some now very common



species will go extinct. The harm will not be on the species only, the ecosystems as a whole will also be affected. The chain of plants, animals, bacterias, and other organisms can be disrupted from the slightest change in the environment. As the industrialization growth accelerates every day, the more harm is made to the nature. Hence, there are a lot of changes in the ecosystem that damages the routine and the lives of all organisms. We usually disregard these changes due to economic gain, however this needs to come to an end. Our lives depend on the ecosystems and the vital things they provide us like nutritions and water.



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Definition of Key Terms

Mitigate: To make a situation or the effects of something less unpleasant, harmful, or serious

Species: a group of animals or plants whose members are similar and can breed together to produce young animals or plants

Ecosystem: All the animals and plants in a particular area, and the way in which they are related to each other and to their environment

Overexploitation: The harvesting of a renewable resource to the point of diminishing returns, which can lead to the destruction of the resource

Environmental Cycle: A natural process in which elements are continuously cycled in various forms between different compartments of the environment (e.g., air, water, soil, organisms)

Biodiversity: The variety of plants and animals in a particular place

Population: The number of [organisms] living in a particular area, country etc

Ecosystem Services: The benefits obtained by people from ecosystems

Background Information

This situation has been considered a problem relatively recently, so there aren't enough of precautions that were taken or laws that were implemented yet.



Exploitation for Food & Clothing

The humankind needs nutrition and protection from the weather, so we supply animals and plants to feed and clothe ourselves. However, in the recent centuries we have crossed the line that balances both our needs



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and the species' safety. The most harming type of animal exploitation is to use them for food, and the second one is to use them for clothing. Apart from us taking their lives, the animals also go through horrible and cruel processes while being killed. They suffer from anxiety, tiredness, alive burning and boiling, weather conditions, fear,



thirst and hunger, etc. Most common usage of animals that do an incredible amount of harm to the species are fishing, fish farming, production and overbreeding for milk, pig farming, fur making processes, chicken and hen factories, overbreeding for eggs, hunting for their skin and fur, overbreeding and hunting for wool, feather and silk, and bee farming. Overbreeding is bad for the species since the method of overbreeding is usually pumping the animals with dangerous chemicals that cause mutations in their genetical information, or changing their DNA for purposefully done mutations.

Exploitation for Entertainment Purposes

Animals are often being used for entertainment purposes such as dolphin shows, dog fights, bullfights, zoos, hunting, circuses, rodeos, etc. People use these animals to have fun, but the animals suffer a lot from it. Circuses and zoos cage and take animals to environments which the animals are not adapted to in little cages which are usually not even $2m^2$ in size. These kind of acts cause animals to not be able to breed properly in their own environment, and die. Hence, species go extinct for people's profit.



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Sustainable development

Sustainable development is defined by the UN as “Sustainable development has been defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. In 2015, 17 goals were determined as sustainable development goals, and were adopted by world leaders. These goals are aiming the end of climate change, inequalities, poverty, hunger, water contamination, exploitation of species and the nature, economic struggles, and many more worldwide problems which the humanity, the nature, and many species suffer from. If these goals can be met on the planned date which is 2030, nearly all of our major problems concerning primary needs and life quality will be solved.



Biodiversity

Biodiversity refers to the variety of any kind or level of life such as organisms, genes, ecosystems and species. The chain system of life can only be maintained with the optimum biodiversity. The importance of biodiversity



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even goes to the existence of any kind of life on earth, since every ecosystem and form of organism is linked to one another. It plays an important role on keeping the planet we live in a healthy and diverse home. Wildlife crimes are the worst at endangering biodiversity. According to Wildlife Justice Commission, [every 30 minutes an elephant is killed for their ivory, every 8 hours a rhino is poached for their horns, there are less than 4,000 tigers left in the wild, and USD 1bn worth of illegally sourced python skins are imported into Europe each year] (WJC). Despite what we are actually doing right now, we should instead try to enhance the technology and the methods we use to provide our nutritious and clothing needs, and luxury, for the benefit of the species, biodiversity and ecosystems.

The link between biodiversity and ecosystem services is an important factor. They need to be in balance, otherwise changes in biodiversity affect the ability of ecosystems to supply services and to recover from disturbances. When a species is added or lost at a particular location, the various ecosystem services specifically associated with that species are changed. An ecosystem usually balance itself, however with this rapid loss and change make the ecosystem and natural control systems to lose the optimum levels and the balance, hence this situation causes various problems for both the humankind and every other life form on earth. Link between human well-being and ecosystem services is an unignorable factor of the exploitation of species. Humans depend on the ecosystem and it's valuables, so the environment is used for our essential needs all the time, which created the overusage itself. Also, most of the world's economy is dependent on the ecosystems and biodiversity, however, research shows that the more industry and the demand for money grow, the faster biodiversity lessens. The degradation of nature seems to work contrary to the humankind's wishes. Despite this much ignorance of the present degradation, ecosystem services include provisioning services such as food, water, timber, fiber, and genetic resources.



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These services are being exploited, thus the future of these services are unpredictable. The consumption is faster than it's renovation, so the sustainability of the species that are being consumed are in danger.

Timeline of Major Events

Dates	Major Events
1971	Ramsar Convention - An international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands.
1973	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora - A treaty that aims to protect the wild life from over-exploitation from international trade.
1973	United States Endangered Species Act -The environmental law that was 99% effective on protecting endangered species. It is the most powerful tool we have on preventing extinction.
1992	Convention on Biological Diversity - It is an agreement dedicated to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and wildlife.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

1. WWF (World Wildlife Federation)

- World Wildlife Federation was founded in 1961, and their aim is to build the balanced relationship between humans and wildlife, and to protect wildlife from human exploitation. Being one of the most well-known and biggest organizations in the world



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about protecting the species, it has more than 5 million supporters in more than 100 countries. The organization nearly helps and plays a role on every case concerning the safety or the well-being of animals. Their website is <http://wwf.org/>

2. United States of America

- The U.S. has done many acts in order to protect wildlife in the past. The very biodiverse environment of it needs protection due to human consumption, hobbies (like hunting and animal killing), and industrial purposes. This protection has been present to conserve the wildlife resources. The acts are an example to all member states. Nearly each state has a plan of its own, like the extensive Michigan Wildlife Action Plan and the California State Wildlife Action Plan. Their websites are :
 - Michigan Wildlife Action Plan : https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79136_79608_83053---,00.html
 - California State Wildlife Action Plan : <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/SWAP>

3. PETA (People for Ethical Treatment of Animals)

- PETA is the largest animal rights organization in the world with more than 6.5 million supporters. They are focused more on the consumption part of animal usage in the industry, so it is highly related with economic gain from species. Its main focus areas are laboratories, food industry, clothing trade, and the entertainment industry. PETA's voice is well-known and loud, so their proposals of laws and treaties are valuable. Their website is <https://www.peta.org/about-peta/>



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4. Conservation International

- Conservation International is an organization that does research on nature and its usages, and informs people on how to benefit from the nature without pushing it's healthy limits and disturbing the natural balance of the ecosystems.
- <https://www.conservation.org/Pages/default.aspx>

5. Lush Retail Ltd.

- Lush is a cosmetic producer which refuses to do animal testing, actively protests any kind of animal cruelty, and encourages other brands to follow their lead. Animal testing has become one of the greatest concerns about extinction of species in the 21st century, since any kind of drug or product testing takes place on animals first. Contrary to the common belief, they are not just tested on dogs or mices. Hundreds of species are used in drug testing, including endangered ones. Lush is a very popular and loud company, so their policy and campaigns matter a lot in the long term actions. Their website is: <https://uk.lush.com/article/animal-testing-our-policy>

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

World Database on Protected Areas by IUCN

The biggest database which can be accessed online that shows terrestrial and marine protected areas. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) have collaborated on this project in order to gather data on protected areas, how and why they are protected. The project also provides information on the



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basics of the areas that are protected. The project is managed by UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC).

Protected Planet Report 2016 by IUCN

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has created a “Protected Planet Report” in 2016. The report discusses and analyzes the effect and importance of protected areas on the Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals set by the UN. As mentioned above in the Sustainable Development Goals part, a lot of awareness should be created in order to meet these goals. This report focuses its attention on how the protected areas are very valuable for SDGs.

Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2010-2020 by Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

The plan that was signed by member parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2010 is to keep the well-being of biological diversity while also keeping the benefits the nature and species provide to the people. In this ten-year framework, ambitious but realistic targets, known as the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, were adopted (Convention on Biological Diversity). Governments need to follow these goals and commit themselves strongly in order to achieve these 20 new targets set out by the Strategic Plan. Their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) should be updated and renewed so that their corporation is effective and helpful on the subject. The Convention on Biological Diversity’s vision with this project is “By 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people.” (Convention on Biological Diversity)



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Possible Solutions

I. Reduce Dependency on Fossil Fuels

Fossil fuels destroy the nature, thus reducing our dependency on fossil fuels is a huge step towards saving species. As an alternative, renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar power can be used. Also recycling, reusing products, living green and conserving energy as an individual can eliminate the pollution that accompanies cause while producing fossil fuel energy.

II. Protect Coastal Ecosystems

Coastal ecosystems are present where the lands meet the sea. According to UN Environment, coastal ecosystems are the home to one thirds of the world's population, since the humankind has always chosen to live near water. Coastal ecosystems are one of the most important factors to life of all organisms because the chain of life and ecosystems depend on mostly coastal areas. Ecosystems play an essential role in adaptation, since we are in an age of detrimental climate change. Coastal areas should be protected thoroughly from the effects of the climate change and pollution so that the most possible lowest rate of loss in species can be obtained.

III. Ecosystem Preservation

Ecosystem preservation can be done by sustainable harvesting of wild plant and animal species, creating more protected areas, opening up new national parks and improving the quality of the present national parks, creating wildlife reserves, collecting genes of the species of any kind of organisms and putting them in gene banks in case of future damage.



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IV. Environmental Management

Population management is important because as we breed and the human population increases, the more we consume and the more we need place. So efficient population planning of the governments gains importance. Also, environmental improvement with community participation is crucial. The public is actually the one to make little decisions that can add up to big results. Another thing that can be done by the public is family planning. Family planning is important for both the society and the environment. On the other hand, there are many things that the governments should do, such as managing tourism, improving health and education systems, and updating their national policies to meet the Sustainable Development Goals which leads the governments to achieve nearly 100% success on environmental management.

V. Land Resources Management:

Land management is a crucial subject since the amount of harm the humans have caused to forests, soil, and plants. Hence new ideas and solutions should be implemented in every state about land resources management such as strategies for soil conservation, agroforestry, mixed tree planting, reforestation, sustainable harvesting of hardwoods, wood planting especially for fuel and paper usages.

VI. Raising Awareness

As it is important to raise awareness to the topic in every possible subject, it is very crucial in this one too. If the societies are informed about how the human consumption destroys our planet and other organisms that live in this world, and if the next generations grow up knowing the



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importance of this fact, the change we want will accelerate very quickly and then the results will be amazing.

VII. Veganism

Veganism is an important method to preserve biodiversity as well as the environment, as it significantly reduces human impact on population sizes, pollution, and global warming. On a daily basis, humans consume 222 pounds of animal products per person, including meat. Most of the practices used in the production processes of dairy goods are neither animal nor environment-friendly. Around 18% of global greenhouse gasses are produced by the animal goods industry, which damages the environment both for humans and the rest of the animal kingdom, and results in decreased biodiversity. The steady decline of animal populations also plays a key role in the reduction of animal populations.

Useful Links

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1852758/>

<https://carnegieendowment.org>

<https://www.cbd.int/countries/>

<https://www.greenfacts.org/en/ecosystems/index.htm>

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>

<http://www.internationalwildlifelaw.org/treaties.shtml>

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