

MY, YOURS, OUR **BIODIVERSITY**



BIODIVERSITY IS THE VARIETY OF ALL LIFE – IT IS LIVING DIVERSITY

We all love a fragrant, colorful meadow. We love birdsong in the morning. We love a murmuring brook over which a damselfly flutters. If we love the magic of the natural world, why are we not better protecting the biodiversity that makes all of this possible? Let us get closer to nature and meet its wonders, because it is much easier to protect something with which we are connected and familiar.

Biodiversity is the variety of life on Earth in all its different forms, from bacteria and fungi to plants and animals. Humans are also part of biodiversity. Biodiversity is not only the variety of species, it is also variety within species – their genetic variation – and the range of ecosystems inhabited by those species. Life on Earth has formed over billions of years of evolution. A remarkable feature of biodiversity is the interconnectedness of organisms which could not survive alone. Together, they form a unique tapestry and strongly influence our planet's environment.



Did you know? Expert estimates on the number of species inhabiting our planet vary widely. There are undoubtedly many more organisms than have been identified to date (approximately 1.5 million). Some studies estimate the number of species at around 2 million, and others put this number at 12 million or more. The latest study estimates that as many as 2 billion species inhabit Earth, which is over a thousand times more than have been discovered so far. Proportionally, this would mean 6.8 million insect species!

Slovenia is recognized as a European biodiversity hotspot, due to its small area and varied ecosystems. According to the data gathered to date, Slovenia is home to 21,000 animal species (including 18,000 insect species) and around 3,000 species of vascular plants. Slovenia's karst caves have exceptional richness and are home to as many as 200 aquatic and 150 land species. Five Slovene cave systems are listed among the world's 20 most diverse cave systems.

BIODIVERSITY ENABLES US TO SURVIVE

Apples are the most widely cultivated fruit in Slovenia. Do you know any ancient Slovene apple varieties, such as Carjevič? How about Bobovec, Krivopecelj and Štajerski Mošancelj? Who does not take pleasure in biting into a ripe, juicy apple? Or enjoy spreading honey onto a fragrant piece of bread? In Slovenia, we are fortunate to be able to breathe fresh air on a morning walk and have clean water running from our taps.



Biodiversity provides so many goods that they are self-evident and mundane, and many people take them for granted. Plants provide oxygen and purify the air, and forests and wetlands purify and accumulate water, preventing floods and drought. Biodiversity is our source of food, medicines, materials and renewable energy. Biodiversity contributes to the character of natural places enjoyed for relaxation and recreation. Biodiversity acts as a source of inspiration for research and art.



Did you know? Three trees produce approximately 300 kg of oxygen per year, which is enough for one person to breathe. As much as one third of our food supply relies on insect pollination. Some vitamins are only derived from seeds and fruits that form after flowers are pollinated by insects. Domestic plants and animals are part of biodiversity as well. Their wild relatives remain a treasure trove of genetic features which are crucial to their survival as they adapt to climate and other environmental changes.



BIODIVERSITY IS DISAPPEARING BEFORE OUR EYES

Have you noticed fewer butterflies and bees in your garden? And that windshields of your cars are not as full of insects as they used to be? Where have all the flowering meadows gone? Would you dare to drink water from the nearby brook?



Growing demand for life's comforts coupled with a growing population necessitates increased exploitation of natural resources. Human demands put huge pressure on the environment, which is heavily impacted by pollution, changes in natural habitats, increasingly severe climate change, and a growing number of invasive species. Species extinction, and thus the loss of biodiversity, is an unavoidable consequence of human impact. Species are not replaceable. An extinct species is gone forever, together with all its features and relations with the environment that have formed as it has evolved.

Did you know? The vast majority of world's species are in decline. Extinction is occurring at a rate 1000 times higher than ever before in Earth's geologic history. This species decline has happened since humans have become the dominant species on the planet in the past few centuries.

The number of species worldwide has declined by more than one quarter in the past 35 years. Trends of decline are also noticeable in Slovenia, where 10% of all ferns and vascular plants, as well as 56% of all vertebrates (mammals, birds, reptiles,

amphibians, birds) are endangered.

Approximately one percent of the sun's energy reaching Earth is captured by plants and incorporated in organic matter which sustains almost all life on the planet. One species - humans - consumes more than a third of all this organic food. Less than two thirds remains for all the millions of species with which we share the planet.

Lynx is one of our most endangered species in Slovenia. Population has declined drastically in the past 15 years, likely due to inbreeding and illegal hunting.



BIODIVERSITY – OUR EVERYDAY CONCERN

Biodiversity is of vital importance. Biodiversity gives us all we need to survive. Now, biodiversity needs us to protect it. Let us act before it is too late!



Protected areas are one of the main organized ways of protecting biodiversity. But they are not enough! Everybody everywhere needs to work to protect biodiversity, including in non-protected areas. Future development and prosperity of our society relies on our ability to integrate our way of life with preserving biodiversity. We must learn to respect nature and use its resources in a non-damaging way. Only this will enable decent living of future generations. Responsible attitudes towards nature and the environment are a moral duty of each individual.



Did you know? *There are numerous protected areas in Slovenia including one national park, three regional parks, and 34 landscape parks, as well as 56 nature reserves and more than 1200 natural monuments. Together these encompass more than 13% of the country's area. Natura 2000 is a European network of special protected areas with the core goal to preserve biodiversity. These protected areas extend across 37.5% of Slovenia, the largest percentage among EU member states.*

Excessive use of natural resources is one of the main factors threatening biodiversity. Each individual can help preserve biodiversity by living more sustainably, following these principles: eat locally grown food; eat less meat; avoid plastic packaging; buy only what you really need; use a bicycle and public transportation; save energy and water; support nature conservation initiatives.

We cannot afford to be indifferent towards nature and its protection. Biodiversity on Earth is in crisis, and each individual needs to take action to stem species loss.



THE TALE OF BIODIVERSITY

An
(almost)
true story

Terror of the white Night



THE NIGHT FALLS ...



... AND THE BATS ARE AWAKENING
IN THE BELL TOWER.



ALAS, OUR TIME HAS COME AGAIN!



LET'S HUNT,
MY FRIENDS!



WHAT THE-!?

I THOUGHT IT
WAS NIGHT-TIME
ALREADY!



IT IS.

THEN
WHAT'S
THIS LIGHT
OUTSIDE?



PEOPLE
HAVE SET UP
FLOODLIGHTS.

NOT ONLY ARE THEY
BLINDING US, THEY'RE
KILLING OUR PREY!



WE'VE
GOT
TO ACT!

BUT
WHAT CAN
WE DO?



WE WILL BUY
SUNGLASSES!



HMM, MAYBE THIS
IS NOT SUCH
A BAD IDEA.



FIVE MINUTES LATER IN THE PARISH OFFICE



WE WILL ORDER
SUNGLASSES
ONLINE.



SQUEAK!





DID YOU KNOW THAT AS MANY AS **28** SPECIES OF BATS LIVE IN SLOVENIA? EACH SPECIES HAS ITS PLACE IN NATURE. THEY ARE PART OF BIODIVERSITY. SOMETIMES, A BIT OF GOOD WILL IS ENOUGH FOR SPECIES PROTECTION.



www.naturaviva.si



Biodiverzitetā – umetnost življenja
Biodiversity – Art of Life



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NACIONALNI INŠTITUT ZA BIOLOGIJO
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF BIOLOGY



REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA
MINISTRSTVO ZA OKOLJE IN PROSTOR

Biodiversity and its significance for humanity are not well recognized as values and therefore remain underestimated. In the LIFE NATURAVIVA project we aim to reveal the exceptional natural values of Slovenia and their significance and to highlight the threats to them. Follow our project and events at www.naturaviva.si and our Facebook profile LIFE Naturaviva.

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