

1st Prize Winner

How Can We Protect Biological Diversity and Stop the Sixth Mass Extinction?

By Daniel Bentley, aged 9 (UK)

Hello! My name is Danny and I am a hawksbill turtle. My family and I live in the tropical oceans and feed on sponges, jelly fish and sea anemones. We help maintain the health of coral reefs and sea grass beds. Our species have existed on Earth and have travelled the seas for the last 100 million years but now we are critically endangered. We are threatened by the loss of nesting and feeding habitats, excessive egg collection, fishery-related mortality, pollution, and coastal development. We get trapped in plastic bags and fishing nets, our beaks get caught in plastic beer-can holders, we mistake rubbish in the ocean for food and die in agony. However, our biggest threat is wildlife trade. We are killed for our meat and beautiful shells.

Humans rely on biodiversity for their health and wellbeing. There is still time to save humanity by saving us and other species, but time is running out fast and the window of opportunity is nearly closed. Humans need to act without delay to save what they can or lose us forever.

I urge the booming human population to stop destroying our habitats and polluting the oceans, stop the illegal hunting, fishing and wildlife trade and immediately tackle the climate crisis.

I think the key to solving this problem is in educating people and explaining to them that every creature has its place and plays an important role in the environment. We all are entwined and entangled together, and when one species disappears, we all suffer. We need to develop special programmes, speak to every government and every remote community, help them to understand why each of us matters. Everyone should start from themselves every little change helps immensely. Use less water, switch the lights off when you are not in the room, buy less, recycle more, reduce your waste and discard your rubbish in a bin!! And love and care about all the animals like you love and care about yourself and your family. We all are one big family

Hello! I am Daniel Bentley. I am a 9-year-old from King's College School, United Kingdom. Turtles are my favourite animals. Please, help me save them! Please, hear my voice!!

2nd Prize

Protecting Biological Diversity

By Zeina Ahmed Hussein, aged 9 (Egypt)

2020 witnessed a pandemic that was never seen before during the past 100 years, COVID19; which had a major impact on the whole world especially on human lives and economy. But, on the other side had a positive effect to demonstrate to us how human daily activities are affecting negatively the environment, during the lockdown scientists reported that the level of pollution had decreased worldwide, water pollution reduced significantly, and solid waste diminished.

In Egypt, Cairo is considered as one of the most polluted cities worldwide due to the high population, crowded streets with cars omitting toxic gases. But during the outbreak, and for the first time, I could see the clear blue sky and the moon was white as snow.

People were staying at home, most of the shops closed, traffic was very light, no airplanes in the sky, most of the factories closed, so, less pollution everywhere; we could see how life could be without pollution. This highlighted how human intervention can have a negative impact on our ecosystem.

Now it is time to think how to live this life forever, how to protect our ecosystem to preserve the nature and the creatures, this is our responsibility as we are the accused of ruining the biological diversity in our environment by applying the following

Encouraging carpooling and public transportation to minimize air pollution while expanding more in electric cars especially in big cities as Cairo.

In Egypt we have sun all year round, which a clean source of energy and manufacturers should always favour this source of energy

Regulate overfishing and fishers must use nets with big holes to catch big fish and give a chance to small fish to grow, also control should be made on the timing of fishing as well as the places to fish to avoid extinction.

Encourage planting in cities as the roof top of buildings as it increases the level of Oxygen, while avoiding chemical pesticides as it does not only kill harmful insects but impact all the other creatures in the soil.

Encourage recycling and minimize the use of plastic to the maximum possible as it is affecting the environment polluting the earth, the seas and causing climate change.

Our environment is our treasure, and we should work hard to maintain this treasure safe as it is our way for a healthy life and a balanced environment.

3rd Prize (Joint)

Protecting Biodiversity

By Noela Betty Namukose, aged 8 (Seychelles)

Biological diversity is the variability among living organisms from all sources, including marine and other aquatic ecosystems.

Wild species, plants and animals not only help soil to maintain its nutrients, but man too depends on them for food, medicines and other activities.

In construction, for example, timber is needed so trees are cut down. It is reported that approximately 3.5 billion to 7 billion trees are cut down per year. The cutting down of trees exposes the earth causing soil erosion, floods and destruction of habitats for many micro-organisms. The use of pesticides, and bush burning in farming, overfishing, use of illegal fishing methods are all threats to biodiversity.

Sustainable use of land and other resources which involves satisfying the present needs while keeping in mind the needs of future generations, is what is needed to protect biodiversity.

For example, in Seychelles, 60% of the total land area consists the zones that are protected for environmental reasons. There are projects like promoting use of wind energy, solar power as alternative sources of energy. The importation of hybrid cars too is being encouraged to reduce carbon emissions.

A thriving marine ecosystem is good for all of us. This is because fishing and tourism are the main sources of income and employment in Seychelles. Illegal fishing, therefore, is a direct threat to life thus sustainable fishing is a key priority for government. Equally, conservation in this area means endangered and endemic species, as well as the country's residents will have a guaranteed future. This can be done through opening up nurseries for marine life and protected area where nobody is allowed to fish.

In schools we are taught how to recycle and re-use materials for eco- healing. Back yard gardening is encouraged both in school and at home. For example, I have a small garden for chili and tomatoes. Eco-healing marathons take place every year to help create more awareness about the dangers of environmental pollution. These are good initiatives but in addition, environmental studies should be formally taught in class.

Forests are the only liveable habitat for a variety of species around the globe. One way of ensuring sustainability in this area is to marry ecology and economy. This can be done for example at school level by encouraging children to plant a tree in their first year in school in exchange for books. And at home parents can initiate tree planting activities on yearly basis as part of their children's birthday celebrations.

In conclusion, creation of awareness is key in increasing biodiversity and achieving the UNs 2050 vision of living in harmony with nature.

3rd Prize (Joint)

How Can We Prevent the Sixth Mass Extinction and Live in Harmony With Our Biological Diversity?

By Naaish Mohamed Naseem, aged 10 (Maldives)

When we look at the earth's diverse biological life and its condition now, could we say that they are safe, and humans are living in harmony with them? The answer is no.

What is the 6th Mass Extinction? Researchers refer to this as the Holocene Extinction, also known as Anthropocene Extinction, which is an ongoing extinction event. In world history, this is going to be the sixth time and each time more than three-quarters of all species have vanished forever. Now, the next mass extinction is upon us, and we humans seem to be one of the main causes of this catastrophic threat.

The current predicament leads to one important question. Why is it necessary for us to protect the biodiversity of our ecosystem? In an ecosystem the survival of all the species are closely linked to one another. A healthy biodiversity provides many beneficial services such as cleaning our water, purifying the air from pollution, maintain out soil, recycle nutrients, regulate the climate and provide us with food and medicine.

Humans have made huge contribution in the deterioration of our healthy biological diversity. Thus, it should be our responsibility to make things right. Research has proven that we can counter the damage and preserve our ecosystems. One of the best ways we can prevent further damage is to stop burning fossil fuels which leads to global warming, air pollution and climate change. By harnessing modern technology, we can find means to convert wind and solar energy to our uses.

Another cause is damaging of habitats by deforestation and poaching that directly affect the survival of many species of fauna and animals. The government and authorities can implement rules to protect the forests, animal habitats, and endangered species by monitoring and regulating the consumption. Legal action can be taken against poachers who tend to harm/kill endangered animals.

Slowing human population growth would help the ecosystem in reducing consumption of natural resources, pollution and waste we produce. We could also reduce the usage of plastics and non-biodegradable products to minimize the environmental threats.

All of the above-mentioned factors are enough to convince us to stand against the destruction and prevent the 6th Mass Extinction and preserve a healthy biodiversity by learning to live in harmony with our nature.

3rd Prize (Joint)

How Can We Protect Biological Diversity and Stop the Sixth Mass Extinction?

By Kayzen Tan, aged 9 (Malaysia)

Killing is a crucial way for animals to become extinct. It means that the species would not be found anywhere once they are wiped out. Animals that have faced extinction are Dodo birds, Dinosaurs, Tasmanian Tigers and Passenger pigeons. We can't see these animals anymore. That's why we must take measures to curb mass extinction.

Believe it or not, there were leatherback turtles in Terengganu before, however they are not returning. On a rare occasion, a leatherback turtle nest was spotted in 2017 but since then there isn't any news whether the eggs have been successfully hatched and released. All these boils down to pollution and egg poaching. Water has its own filter that cleans up pollutants in seas, but too much contamination gives it no time to purify itself. So, if we stop littering the ocean, we can speed up the filter. We need to clean up beaches and seas and stop using plastic bags and straws. We should use reusable ones. We could also recycle plastics we use at home. We should also stop eating turtle eggs to stop demands for poaching.

The land also has a filter like breeding animals, for example there are two rhinos left in the wild. If they breed, the rhino population will increase. There are some ways to keep land animals from extinction like, building conservation sanctuaries to protect and conserve animals.

Similarly, we could keep the water clean by using less chemicals. We need to protect the food chain. By doing so, we will protect the source of food of many animals. Therefore, we should stop using pesticides and herbicides as they overkill pests and herbs that are at the lower food chain. We should not kill insects like bees and mosquitoes. Bees are pollinators for plants and mosquitoes are food for frogs and dragonflies. We could do so by educating the people in school or using the internet to spread the knowledge.

Finally, we need to slow down climate change. The animals that are affected by climate change are penguins and polar bears. To do so, we could opt for reusable energy, walk more to conserve energy, and have more systematic food planting system. We could also stop using nuclear power and use less coal.

We should start taking measures now so that our future generations can see the animals in real life and not merely in pictures.

4th Prize

Protecting Biodiversity What a Priority

By Moyosore Akinwumi, aged 9 (Nigeria)

Biodiversity is the variety of plant and animal life on earth. It is typically a measure of depending on the genetic species and ecosystem level. Biodiversity boosts ecosystem productivity when each species, have an important role to play. Greater species diversity ensures natural sustainability for all life forms.

To protect biodiversity, government should make laws to protect plants and animals. These laws help to protect and control natural habitat. Nature preserves are also forms of government regulation. National parks are a place where organisms live and form part of their growth and development. Example is a zoo.

Again, natural habitat should be protected. When a habitat is damaged by human beings, there are impacts to its natural state. Plants and animals can be fixed naturally, and this has been shown to be a more promising way of returning biodiversity to a region.

Research should also be carried out in order to protect biodiversity. Understanding how species interact within their environment is important to protect them. Human beings need to understand the interaction between species and find new and more ways of protecting these organisms.

We should also learn to purchase sustainable products- many products are now labelled with eco-labels that indicate if they are suitable (eco-friendly). Our consumption of natural resources is one of the main reasons for biodiversity loss, so it is our responsibility to consume products that are produced in a most sustainable way possible.

In addition, sustainable living is something that we can each choose to do on a daily basis, whether it is by taking shorter showers, riding a bike to work etc This helps reduce the amount of resources[i] used. This is one of the most important way of protecting biodiversity because if everyone chose to live sustainably, Biodiversity in a variety habitat would improve.

Finally, educating people about the importance of biodiversity conservation increases the level of awareness on how to protect biodiversity.

5th Prize

Protecting Biodiversity

By Anveshika Mathpal, aged 8 (India)

On 5 June 2020 on World Environment Day our honourable Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Moditweet said we reiterate our pledge to preserve our planets rich biodiversity, let us collectively do whatever possible to ensure the flora and fauna with whom we share the earth thrive, may we leave a better planet for the coming generations.

Every year 22 may the world celebrate biological diversity and the UN theme for this year is our solutions are in nature. So, when we talk about the biodiversity it means the existence of a number of different kinds of animals and plants which together make a good and healthy environment.

The term biodiversity was coined in 1985. It deals with natures variety the biosphere, we can divide into three parts (1) genetic, (2) species, (3) ecological biodiversity. As we all know that the world has faced 5 biotic crises (1) Ordovician-Silurian extinction 444 million years ago (2) Late Devonian extinction 383-359 million years ago (3) Permian-Triassic extinction 252 million years ago (4) Triassic-Jurassic extinction 201 million years ago (5) Cretaceous-paleogene extinction 66 million years ago (6) Extinction today the previous 5 biotic crisis reason was natural. But the 6th biotic crisis will occur by the mistakes of human.

So, to protect our biodiversity we have to increase ecosystem productivity as each species in an ecosystem has a specific role to play. We should not disturb the native plants and animals so that they can live freely in their habitat. Create maximum wildlife sanctuaries. Setting up garden in houses. Make sure that each person plant one tree every month. We have to promote soil formation to attract good insects by planting pollen and nectar plants. Support a larger number of plants species and a greater variety of crops, use organic manure and sustainable certificate USDA organically produced ingredients. Organic crops must be raised without conventional pesticides, petroleum-based fertilizers or sewage plastics bottle etc. We have to conserve water for our future.

This year pandemic taught us about many things like depend less on car, bus or other vehicles, drive green. Eat hygienic and healthy food, Homemade food and tie your hand with nature. Depend less on medicine, change your lifestyle and find out the healing solution in nature.

You heal your nature, and your nature will heal you. That's why Thomas Eisner said Biodiversity is the greatest treasure we have its dismantling is to be prevented at all cost.