

NATURE

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4K

NATURE'S NETWORKS

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4K, 5.1 and Stereo



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It is considered essential, invaluable and worthy of our protection, and yet its impact continues to be underestimated: biodiversity. The term itself is frequently used to describe all manner of things relating to life on our planet—but what does it actually mean? And why do we need it?

Steam rises in the Mata Atlantica, the Atlantic rainforest. There is a rustling sound as a group of woolly spider monkeys appear, long limbs flailing among the branches. These monkeys are among the 8,000 endemic flora and fauna species found only here. Scientists estimate that the rainforest is home to a total of 1.5 million species—and the more research they do, the more they find. Species diversity is higher here than almost anywhere else in the world—but biodiversity means much more than this.

Biodiversity vs. Species Diversity

On the vast, heat-baked plains of the Kalahari in southern Africa, a cheetah launches a sudden attack on an antelope. These big cats are endangered but not just because humans have encroached on their territory—cheetahs are their own worst enemy, because with little genetic variation between them, they are vulnerable to illnesses and deformity

So, biodiversity does not just mean a diversity of types of animals, it also includes genetic diversity within individual species—which is crucial for survival. Within humans, Greenland's Inuit people

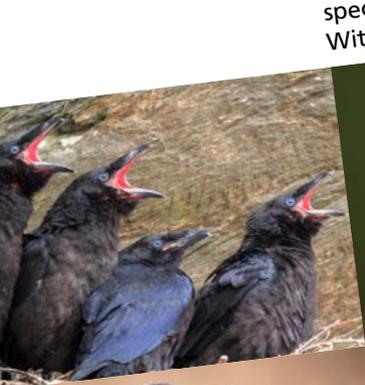
and Australia's Aborigines may be very different after thousands of years of adaptation to different habitats, but both are Homo sapiens. These differences between us ensure the survival of our species.

A Question of Habitat

The peregrine falcon is an undemanding creature, merely requiring a safe place to breed and airspace within which to hunt smaller birds. Like the cheetah, the peregrine falcon is a specialised hunter—but, unlike the big cat, the bird of prey remains widespread. The reason is simple: the peregrine falcon is flexible when it comes to choosing a habitat. The vast range of different habitats on Earth, from the highest mountains to the deepest ocean floors, serve to maintain biodiversity on our planet.

Biodiversity is more than just species diversity, it includes variation in genetics and habitat. For much of human history scientists have examined each species separately, failing to consider the species' position within the complicated network of life that makes up the planet. In fact, it is the relationships between different species that provide the foundation for nature and life to flourish.

Like the many different animals and plants we share our Earth with, we humans are what we are as a result of all that surrounds us. Biodiversity has enabled our existence, it creates a world that is vastly greater than the sum of its parts.



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