



Why We Need Lots of Different Animals and Plants

KS3 Ages 11-14 ⌚ 3 min read

What is Biodiversity?

Biodiversity means having lots of different types of animals and plants living together. Instead of just one type of tree in a forest, imagine hundreds of species—oak, birch, pine, and maple all growing side by side. The same goes for animals: insects, birds, mammals, and reptiles all sharing the same space. This variety is incredibly important for keeping our planet healthy and working properly.

Ecosystems Need Balance

Imagine a team sport where everyone plays the same position. If all players are strikers and no one is a goalkeeper, the team falls apart! **Ecosystems** work the same way. Every animal and plant has a specific job to do. Some plants make oxygen, some animals eat pests, others help spread seeds. When we have many different species, they keep each other in balance.

Think of it like a school where everyone has a different role: teachers, caretakers, dinner staff, and office workers. If everyone was a teacher, nothing would run smoothly. The same happens in nature—we need all the different jobs to keep things working.

Where Our Food and Medicine Come From

Did you know that **many medicines come from plants**? **Aspirin** originally came from willow bark. **Penicillin**, the first antibiotic, came from a fungus. We also depend on animals and plants for food—bees pollinate crops, fish fill our oceans, and hundreds of plant species feed us. If species disappear, we lose potential cures and food sources we haven't even discovered yet.

Protection Against Problems

When there's lots of variety, nature is tougher. If a disease wipes out one plant species, other plants can still survive and feed the animals that depend on them. In a

world where everything is the same, one problem can destroy everything.

Monocultures—farms with only one crop—are much more vulnerable to disease than wild areas full of different plants.

Think of it like having only one type of snack in your lunch box. If you don't like it, you've got nothing to eat. But if you have apples, sandwiches, and chocolate, you have options and backup!

Our Future Depends on It

Protecting **biodiversity** isn't just about saving cute animals—it's about saving ourselves. A healthy planet with many species is more resilient, produces better medicines, and provides more food. That's why protecting rainforests, oceans, and wild spaces is so important. We're still discovering new species and new uses for them. By keeping **biodiversity** strong now, we're protecting our own future.