
Issue#2: Is Biodiversity Overprotected?

“Extinction is normal”(pg26, 1st paragraph). However, the rate this process is happening is up to us, to some extent. In this article, two sides are discussing this rate. One side is arguing that biodiversity is overprotected and the other the opposite.

The first argument, against protection of biodiversity, states that “at a macro level, there is a tradeoff between production/consumption of timber and production/consumption of related environmental amenities”(pg28, 2nd paragraph). In terms of economy that is very true, however, I believe the author is missing some points. Even though people face tradeoffs in their lives, most of the tradeoffs have one beneficial outcome. After this the author introduced the idea of tragedy of the commons, a term which we are familiar from economy (pg29, 4th paragraph). I did not understand how this affected the biodiversity or the protection of it in anyway. Among the others, his best argument was the one about costs to people. He stated that some people have different costs and this differentiation causes overprotection of the biodiversity. “It is irresponsible to enact environmental policies...production of environmental amenities.” (pg31, 2nd paragraph). Overall, before reading the second argument, this argument was convincing enough for me—especially with the help of his last point.

On the other hand, the other argument claims that biodiversity is not overprotected and should be taken more seriously. The example he gives about the tree which might have a substance to prevent HIV virus (pg32, 5th paragraph) stands as a good example. In his argument, he states that there is some government regulations but they are still not enough. “So bits and pieces around...important hot spots” (pg34, 1st paragraph). Also the issue concerning the pharmaceutical companies is a potential

problem. “Pharmaceutical companies have been slow to screen and make use of natural products because of fear of not being able to secure patent rights, because theoretically, or I should say legally, a natural product is not patentable.” (pg34, 3rd paragraph). This also can be a solution for the problem if government can find a way to ignite incentives for the companies. Another solution can be found in biotechnological industry. “We need to push bioengineering to the limit in creating more productive crops...effect on biodiversity” (pg34, 5th paragraph). With the help of the bioengineering, some developments can be achieved. Lastly, teaching society the importance of the results of weak biodiversity regulations can be an affective tool. “Education...for their audiences” (pg35, 6th paragraph).

All in all, the debate over biodiversity seems to be dominated by the people of the second argument. I believe, to make the first argument, the author could use the cost for the government to make these regulations. By doing that, he could convince people that there is a burden on the government, economically. Still, after reading the article and the arguments from both sides, I am totally convinced that biodiversity is not overprotected as a matter of fact; it should be protected even more.