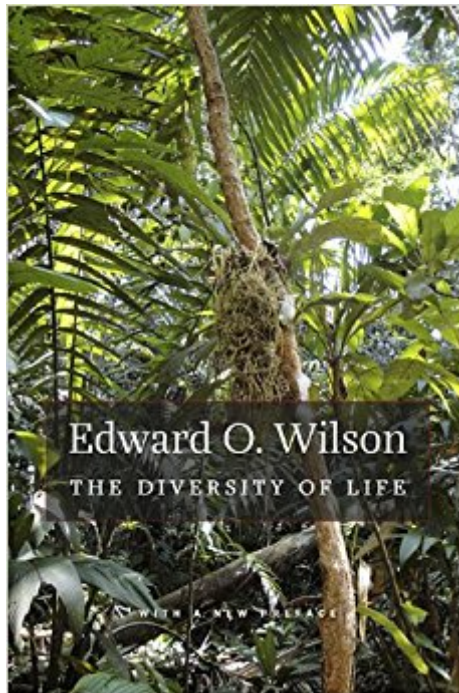




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# The Diversity Of Life: With A New Preface (Questions Of Science)



## Synopsis

View a collection of videos on Professor Wilson entitled "On the Relation of Science and the Humanities" "In the Basin the greatest violence sometimes begins as a flicker of light beyond the horizon. There in the perfect bowl of the night sky, untouched by light from any human source, a thunderstorm sends its premonitory signal and begins a slow journey to the observer, who thinks: the world is about to change." Watching from the edge of the Brazilian rain forest, witness to the sort of violence nature visits upon its creatures, Edward O. Wilson reflects on the crucible of evolution, and so begins his remarkable account of how the living world became diverse and how humans are destroying that diversity. Wilson, internationally regarded as the dean of biodiversity studies, conducts us on a tour through time, traces the processes that create new species in bursts of adaptive radiation, and points out the cataclysmic events that have disrupted evolution and diminished global diversity over the past 600 million years. The five enormous natural blows to the planet (such as meteorite strikes and climatic changes) required 10 to 100 million years of evolutionary repair. The sixth great spasm of extinction on earth--caused this time entirely by humans--may be the one that breaks the crucible of life. Wilson identifies this crisis in countless ecosystems around the globe: coral reefs, grasslands, rain forests, and other natural habitats. Drawing on a variety of examples such as the decline of bird populations in the United States, the extinction of many species of freshwater fish in Africa and Asia, and the rapid disappearance of flora and fauna as the rain forests are cut down, he poignantly describes the death throes of the living world's diversity--projected to decline as much as 20 percent by the year 2020. All evidence marshaled here resonates through Wilson's tightly reasoned call for a spirit of stewardship over the world's biological wealth. He makes a plea for specific actions that will enhance rather than diminish not just diversity but the quality of life on earth. Cutting through the tangle of environmental issues that often obscure the real concern, Wilson maintains that the era of confrontation between forces for the preservation of nature and those for economic development is over; he convincingly drives home the point that both aims can, and must, be integrated. Unparalleled in its range and depth, Wilson's masterwork is essential reading for those who care about preserving the world biological variety and ensuring our planet's health.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Humans, the Harvard University entomologist Edward O. Wilson has observed, have an innate--or at least extremely ancient--connection to the natural world, and our continued divorce from it has led to the loss of not only "a vast intellectual legacy born of intimacy" with nature, but also our very sanity. In *The Diversity of Life*, Wilson takes a sweeping view of our planet's natural richness, remarking on what on the surface seems a paradox: "almost all the species that ever lived are extinct, and yet more are alive today than at any time in the past." (Wilson's elegant explanation is a scientific education in itself.) This great variety of species is, of course, threatened by habitat destruction, global climate change, and a host of other forces, and Wilson revisits his oft-stated call for the protection of wilderness and undeveloped land, noting that "wilderness has virtue unto itself and needs no extraneous justification." We should, he continues, regard every species, "every scrap of biodiversity," as precious and irreplaceable, without attempting to quantify that regard with utilitarian measures such as "bio-economics." In short, Wilson offers with this book a simple, workable environmental ethic that extends the work of Aldo Leopold and other conservationists. A remarkably productive and influential scientist, Wilson is also a fine writer, and his survey of biodiversity makes for welcome and instructive reading. --Gregory McNamee --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

This is still the best book on biodiversity. Wilson, an eminent Harvard entomologist, details the rise of biodiversity on earth and the human threats to it. His eloquent plea to save the rich variety of plant and animal life will resonate with readers of all ages and educational backgrounds. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

I purchased this book to us in a college biology class, not only was it \$20 cheaper than the book store but it had great resources within the book that other copies did not have. The particular book I was sent had chapter summaries in the back of the book, my friends that ordered this book from other sellers did not have summaries at the end. The summaries really helped me understand the dense material and helped me pass the class!

An outstanding and authoritative review of the science and the man-made loss of biodiversity, by someone with a commanding view and deep knowledge.

Let's keep this short: if you don't know or need to be reminded why even the most mundane of living things on this earth is absolutely astonishing, read this book. The prose goes down easy, and frankly, the creation story Wilson tells is more fascinating than any of the others humans have come up with over the last several millennia. But like them, it has a potent potential to change how you look at the world around you.

Great book, easy to read. Not dry like Darwin. Shipped quickly and was in perfect condition.

Received in good order. Dr Wilson writes clearly and expertly on this complex matter, and makes it understandable for non-biologists. Moreover, it is a compelling analysis of worldwide diversity. Highly recommended.

This book was needed for one of my classes and it helped me learn more about life and science. Came very quickly and came to me in very good condition.

great book great price

Came right away and was in perfect condition, I couldn't have asked for more! Not a rip in the page, great book. I can't believe I got it for such a good price

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