

Why does biodiversity MATTER?



Solvay has set out to reduce its pressure on biodiversity by 30 % before 2030. But why is biodiversity so important exactly? Let's find out!



1 What is biodiversity?

Biodiversity spans the spectrum of life on Earth, from microorganisms to plants, animals and entire ecosystems. Yet it's not just the sum of its parts. The concept of biodiversity actually refers to the complex interdependence of species within a defined ecosystem. It provides an array of services that all contribute to making Earth habitable.

50+
million

species are thought to exist on our planet, although only 8 million have been formally identified.

70%

of biodiversity on the Earth's surface is concentrated in just 17 countries.

3.5
billion

years of trial, error and evolution have led to the current complexity of ecosystems on Earth.

2x

the world's GDP
The estimated value of biodiversity, should money be the measure used.

2 How do we depend on diverse life?

We tend to forget it but we're all part of – and depend on – very complex ecosystems. Keeping these ecosystems healthy is essential to humankind's survival in the long run.

Freshwater

Water biodiversity provides food, nutrients and filtration essential to human livelihood and health. It also helps eliminate pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide.

Clean air

Plants and trees break down the polluting chemicals contained in the air we breathe. They also limit the emission of such pollutants by cooling down the air.

Food

Biodiversity is key to maintaining or even increasing the world's food supply. It ensures the sustainable productivity of soil and provides genetic resources for all crops, livestock and marine species harvested for food.

Biodiversity provides us with...

Medicines

25 to 50% of drugs used in modern medicine are derived from genetic resources. Maintaining biodiversity hotspots also protects us from infectious diseases associated with wildlife.

Shelter

Biodiversity mitigates the impact of natural disasters. Experts suggest that better managed mangroves, forests or coastal wetlands could considerably lessen the loss of human lives and damage to property.

Jobs

The agricultural sector accounts for almost 30% of jobs worldwide. In the Southern Hemisphere, forests are the source of livelihood for over 1.6 billion people.

3 All playing a part

What's better than a long speech on the importance of biodiversity? A few concrete examples!

Earthworms

Earthworms make our soil healthier by enhancing decomposition, nutrient cycling and soil structure. They are also the main source of food for various birds, insects, reptiles and mammals!

Wolves

Wolves have long proven their utility, be it in the Russian Steppe, the US or Europe where they regulate other mammal populations. This allows the vegetation to regenerate and feed other essential species.

Coral reefs

Coral reefs shelter 25% of the marine life on our planet, including some of the species we eat. They reduce shoreline erosion and can even be used to treat conditions like arthritis, cancer and viruses.

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