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Biodiversity Preservation

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Editor's Note

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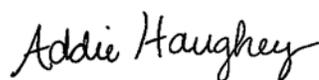
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EDITORS' NOTE

Variety is not just the spice of life; it is its backbone. The United Nations declared 2010 to be the International Year of Biodiversity, and along with the 2010 Biodiversity Target, this year is set to highlight the importance of the world's flora and fauna to the fundamental functioning of the global ecosystem. This added attention to biodiversity issues, including the rapid increase in the rate of its loss, which is precisely what the 2010 Biodiversity Target is seeking to address, reveals that we may be experiencing the Earth's sixth great extinction. Biological diversity, or the variability among living organisms, helps to provide food for human civilization, protects against the spread of disease, and offers innumerable opportunities for scientific study and casual enjoyment. Humanity is both a part of this great diversity and the single largest cause of its rapid loss. With disastrous events such as the recent oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico fresh in the minds of the American public, it is clear that biodiversity is under siege.

In this issue of Sustainable Development Law & Policy, our authors will discuss several international instruments that seek to preserve biodiversity, including the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Another author will analyze the threat of endocrine-disrupting chemicals to the United States' wildlife and suggests that the Clean Water Act is a possible regulatory solution to this problem. The introduction of this issue offers some of the root causes of biodiversity loss and puts forward novel, science-based solutions. Our student features present some lesser known threats to biodiversity loss, including the impacts that controlled and wild fires have on forest management, the potential loss of agricultural biodiversity due to the Food and Drug Administration's approval of cloned livestock, and the potential impact that new sources of renewable energy could have on various species.

We hope that this issue advances the dialogue between practitioners, policymakers, and the scientific community, by presenting unique solutions to problems that will inevitably affect all life on Earth. This issue looks beyond the charismatic mega-fauna, such as the polar bear or the tiger, that have become important symbols of biodiversity preservation and the environmental movement itself, and delves into the heart of biodiversity loss. The state of the world's biodiversity is undeniably bleak. We hope that this issue serves as a complementary note in the essential clarion call to action.



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