How biodiversity is threatened by human activity

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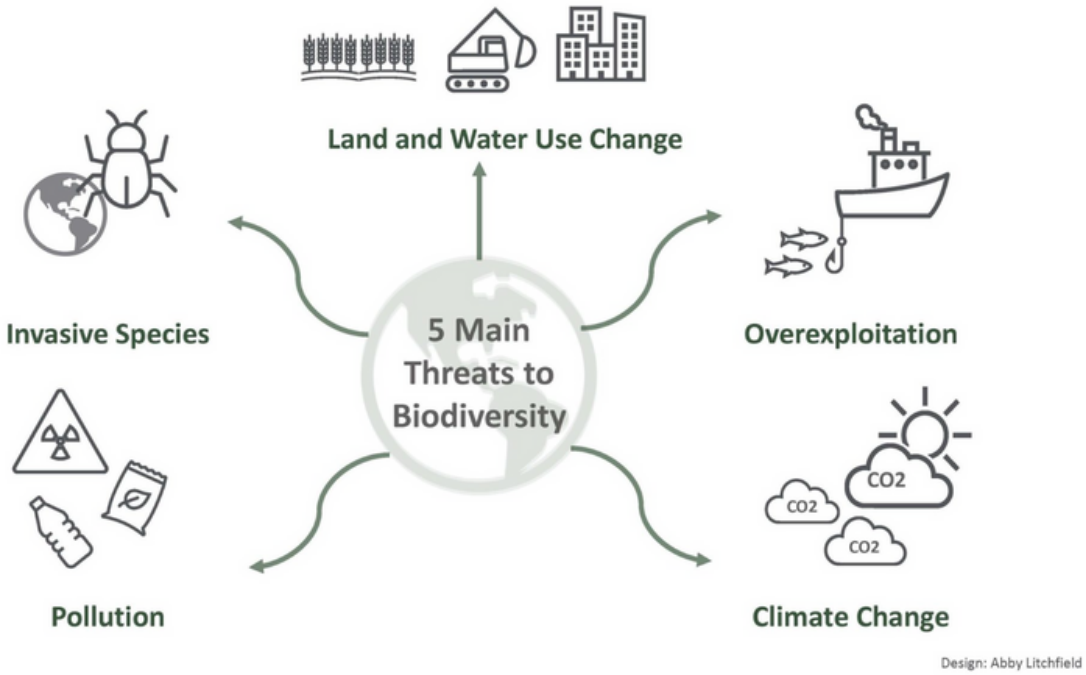
Humanity impacts the planet's biodiversity in multiple ways, both deliberate and accidental. The biggest threat to biodiversity to date has been the way humans have reshaped natural habitats to make way for farmland, or to obtain natural resources, but as climate change worsens it will have a growing impact on ecosystems.

The main direct cause of biodiversity loss is land use change (primarily for large-scale food production) which drives an estimated 30% of biodiversity decline globally. Second is overexploitation (overfishing, overhunting and overharvesting) for things like food, medicines and timber which drives around 20%. Climate change is the third most significant direct driver of biodiversity loss, which together with pollution accounts for 14%. Invasive alien species account for 11%.

Growing demand for natural resources due to the increasing human population, more rapidly increasing per capita consumption, and changing consumption patterns has meant that ever more natural habitat is being used for agriculture, mining, industrial infrastructure, and urban areas.



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Human activities are causing major changes in biological communities worldwide.

These changes can harm biodiversity and ecosystem function.

Ecosystem function is important for supporting plant and animal communities and ensuring our long-term survival.

The main threats facing biodiversity globally are:

- Destruction, degradation and fragmentation of habitats, or homes, for plants animals and fungi.
- Reduction of the ability of life to survive and reproduce because of exploitation, pollution and introduction of alien species.

Species do not all respond equally to these threats. Declines in species often reflect the relationships between species and ecological patterns.