Habitat loss

Habitat loss is the greatest threat to the variety of life. We use more and more land for houses, agriculture and factories. The problem is that we are not just removing species, we are removing entire habitats.

A recent major report (*the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005*) stated that changes in important components of biological diversity have been more rapid in the past 50 years than at any time in human history. All evidence suggests that these rates of change will continue or accelerate in the future.

**What's the cost?**

The natural environment provides us with food, medicine, fuel, clothes, timber, climate regulation, water purification and crop pollination. All these services rely on the enormous diversity afforded us by evolution.

Ecologists and economists estimate the monetary value of nature’s value to society is at least $33 trillion each year.

Scientists are currently working on an international programme to better understand the relationship between healthy ecosystems and poverty alleviation.

Ecosystems – life – drive the natural cycles that make this planet habitable. These cycles rely on a huge number of species to operate effectively.

**Further reading**

- NERC’s Ecosystems Services & Poverty Alleviation programme