

For these and many other reasons, we must preserve our forests. We need protected areas, near-natural forest management practices and consistent punishment of forest offences worldwide.

We must use our forests and their raw materials responsibly!

We must recycle wood and use it only in long-lasting products! Under no circumstances should we allow forests to end up in disposable products such as toilet paper or paper cups! And under no circumstances should we burn forests in power plants to satiate our hunger for energy!



## Forests are treasure troves of biodiversity

Our forests are home to 80 percent of all animal, insect and plant species on land. The tropical rainforests are in fact the most species-rich ecosystem on earth, home to about 50 to 75 percent of all animal and plant species and more than 50,000 different tree species.

All forest-dwelling species fill specific niches and live in mutual relationships with one another. A high species diversity is usually a sign that an ecosystem can recover and adapt better to changing environmental influences. Species-rich forests are thus more resilient, i.e. less vulnerable to disturbances such as extreme weather and insect pests. The more intact a forest ecosystem is, the more resilient it will be. Our survival depends on healthy ecosystems with a rich biodiversity.

### Species extinction and climate change are twin threats

We now know that the climate crisis ultimately threatens the future of most life on earth. However, the rapid extinction of species, which threatens the quality of life for all of us on this planet to at least the same extent as climate change, has not yet become as much a part of the social discourse. Up to one million species could become extinct in the next decade.

Today's species have developed over millions of years, and each species plays its own important role, interacting with others. Loss of any one species can have cascading impacts on many others and on the functioning of whole ecosystems.

Many animals, especially insects and birds, are crucial for pollination and the dispersal of the seeds of an infinite number of plants and fungi. At the other end of life, countless living beings and microbes decompose the biomass of dead animals and plants so that they can be returned to the nutrient cycle for the next round. And when we look at food chains, if a predator suddenly goes missing in one place, we experience rapid population growth of some species, for example, which in turn leads to the extinction of other species.

While climate change is an increasingly important cause of biodiversity loss, loss of biological diversity in turn reduces the resilience of ecosystem and their ability to sequester and store carbon as well as to maintain rainfall cycles, the nitrogen cycle and other vital functions. Biodiversity loss thus worsens climate change.

