Biodiversity and environmental stability

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Abstract

Although levels of biological diversity may seem to be equivalent in different areas, diversity is created and maintained by a range of different processes: overlap of habitat on gradients; a dynamic mosaic of communities; and accumulation and evolution of taxa in extremely stable areas. These different communities will respond in very different ways to disturbance. The most fragile are those whose component taxa are genetically adapted to the stability of a predictable environment. These areas are often under pressure from local rural populations and require intensive local conservation management actions. In other areas, where diversity is adapted to dynamism, communities are more resilient to disturbance and conservation can be best effected by policy instruments.

Notes to readers

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