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# Save the planet: eliminate biodiversity

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## Abstract

My claim is that biodiversity should not play a central role in conservation science. In conservation biology, biodiversity is generally held to be a primary target of conservation and the chief comparative measure of conservation value and success. Nevertheless, it is notoriously difficult to operationalize biodiversity in both a theoretically satisfying and empirically practical way. Recent work in the philosophy of biology has attempted to both clarify and defend the use of the biodiversity concept in conservation science. I argue against these views, and give reasons to think that the biodiversity concept is actually a poor fit for the role we want it to play in conservation biology on both empirical and conceptual grounds. Against pluralists such as Maclaurin and Sterelny, who hold that biodiversity consists of distinct but correlated properties of natural systems, I argue that the supposed correlations between these properties are not tight enough to warrant treating and measuring them as a bundle. I additionally argue that deflationary theories of biodiversity such as Sarkar's don't go far enough, since a large proportion of what we value in the environment falls outside the conceptual bounds of 'biodiversity'. I suggest that in current scientific practice biodiversity is generally an unnecessary placeholder for biological value of all sorts, and that we are better off eliminating it from conservation biology (or at least drastically reducing its role) in favor of clarifying what exactly composes biological value and forming direct measures of those values.

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