

A diverse world

C How is biodiversity threatened?

In May 2008, a [scientific report](#) about biological diversity stated that three wildlife species die out worldwide every hour.

Invasion is one threat to biodiversity – what other causes for the [loss](#) of species are there?

Destruction of habitats

Cities, villages, roads and railways cut through natural habitats. They turn larger areas into areas that are often too small for certain species to survive. This is a particular problem in a country as small as Switzerland.

Trees are cut down and the earth is [sealed off](#) with [tarmac](#) to build houses, factories, roads and parking spaces. Almost one square metre of land is lost to construction every second in Switzerland.

Agriculture: The use of [fertilizers](#), herbicides and pesticides [severely](#) reduces natural diversity.

The rainforests are cut down to produce [goods](#) for the [developed countries](#). The wood is sold to produce [furniture](#). The forest is also cut down or burnt to make room for plantations (e.g. [soy](#) or bio [fuels](#)) or grassland to feed [cattle](#) for meat production. This is one of the greatest [threats](#) to species diversity in the world.

Pollution and climate change

[Exhaust gases](#) from cars, aeroplanes, factories and the heating of houses [increase](#) the concentration of [carbon dioxide](#) in the air. As a result, the climate is warming and living [conditions](#) for plants and animals are changing. This process is happening so quickly that many species are not able to [adapt](#).

Ponds, lakes, rivers and the oceans are [polluted](#) with chemicals, oil, and waste (e.g. plastic bags). This [endangers](#) plants and animals that live in the water, and also the animals (and humans) that eat fish and other water animals.

Hunting, poaching and fishing

Numerous animals across the world, such as certain species of whales, rhinos or tigers, are threatened by extinction [due to](#) hunting and poaching.

A large number of fish that we are used to finding on our plates, such as tuna, for example, are endangered due to overfishing or as [by-catch](#).

