Animal Extinction: Essence And Human-induced Causes

In the year of 2017 ,there have been more incidents of poaching in South Africa (Poaching) than murders in the state of Illinois (Numbers), which has a major city, Chicago, infamous for its crime rate. Humanity deems it evil to murder other human beings, but is fine with murdering other animals for food and accessories that are aesthetically pleasing. How ironic. Since we believe that only human life matters and that other animals are expendable, we end up getting a lot of animals killed though. We are starting to acknowledge this problem though and are trying to spread the word. However,the damage has already been done; mankind has contributed more to the problem of animal extinction than solving it.

In order to explain how humans are causing animal extinction, one must provide a description of what animal extinction is. Extinction is when an entire species, or group of animals, irrevocably removed from the planet, or in a situation where it cannot make offspring. Providing a definition is one thing but in order to fully understand the devastation of extinction, let’s take a look at how many animals are being affected by extinction. Not even Mammals, which we are a part of, are not safe; roughly 1131 mammals out of 5655 of them are at risk of extinction (“Extinction Crisis”). Take the White Northern Rhino species for example. The last male of that species died making it impossible for that rhino species to reproduce (“Most Endangered Animals”). Even though all of the species isn’t extinct, because there is one female left, the White Northern Rhino Species is technically extinct because the female cannot reproduce babies, practically ending the species whenever the last White Northern Rhino dies. Though extinction can happen all at once, extinction is primarily a product of a species being endangered, meaning that if a species has a low number and conditions that will only decrease the population, it is on the verge of being extinct. To prove this, look at the species Vaquita, an aquatic mammal. Since the numbers of the species are low as 30, that scientists predict that it will be extinct within 10 years (“Vaquita”) (“Most Endangered Animals”). The justification on why the term endangered is associated with humans causing animal extinction is that we cause a lot of endangerment just with a few extinctions.

Also, it is necessary for us to understand the causes of extinction as well. Though many of the causes of extinctions are natural occurrences, such as diseases and global scale disasters like the ice age or meteor showers (Bruce Walsh, “Extinction”), the primary causes are due to human activity that only benefits them. Truth be told, 99% of endangered species, or 16,143 of them(“Endangered Earth) are at risk because of human activity (“Extinction Crisis”) all from three major causes.The first cause is global warming, which we cause by driving gas powered automobiles that emit a lot of smoke into the atmosphere.The smoke alters the climate of Earth, consequently creating conditions that make survival for the animals harder. Global warming doesn't affect only land animals, but it also it affects sea life due to the fact that water from the melting ice glaciers sinks into the ocean, making the ocean level rise and oust marine life onto the ground where they suffocate (“Extinction Causes”). Though researchers have looked into electric cars and other renewable resources for alternatives,which would reduce global warming due to them only running on electric, it costs a lot more money than cars that are powered by fossil fuels than cars.For example, the 2018 Smart Fortwo Electric Drive is $24,650 (Brian McHugh,Cheapest Electric) while a Honda Insight is $18,200(Pat. S Most Fuel), keeping in mind that there are cheaper gas cars that are able to still act like transportation. Since people

don’t have the money to purchase electric cars, they have to rely on gas powered cars to drive around which will continue to pollute the air. Thus, the reason why humans choose the cheap transportation that affects the climate rather than the expensive transportation that doesn’t affect the climate.The second big cause of extinction as a result of human activity is overpopulation. Since the human population is quickly growing, at 1.07% or 82 million people being birthed every year (Current), they need to have more shelter. However, humanity doesn’t have a standard of having a finite number of people. So, in order to provide homes to a lot of people being birthed, then we construct shelters out of raw materials. This process destroys the habitats of animals, and we place the houses on more habitats of other animals. Since the population size the isn’t only factor and habitat threat has to be taken into consideration(“Most Endangered Animals”), shelter construction for the giant population is destroying creatures habitats and putting them in jeopardy of other culprits of extinction. The third major cause due to humanity’s reckless behavior is pollution. When people improperly dispose of chemical waste, it gets absorbed within the animals, poisoning and killing them. Even if the animal doesn’t get direct exposure, the chemicals will still evaporate, mix with the precipitation, and form acid rain (Extinction Causes) that puts harmful chemicals in drinking water and pollutes the water that aquatic life live lives in. That is not all, trash that is nonchalantly thrown into rivers,ponds, and on the park could directly kill them in ways such as strangling or leave them in a state that allows predators to eat them. Even though we have trash systems and landfills, those landfills once had animals that had habitats there. Because of the activities, these in turn have put plants at the risk of extinction. In fact 68% of plants are in the way of extinction (“Extinction Crisis”). Because plants are at the base at the food web, if they die it will kill off other animals consecutively because they rely on eating that animal only which explains the high numbers of extinctions we are dealing with.

Furthermore,this is not to say that we are apathetic of reducing animal extinction. In fact, we are starting to recognize these problems; in 1973, America passed the Endangered Species Act that helped animals on endangered lists from becoming extinct (Protecting the Endangered Species). Though the law doesn’t take effect in other countries, the fact that America has a law designed to prevent endangered animals from becoming extinct is a step in reducing extinction. Even other countries have their own laws that inhibit the killing of endangered animals. In fact in Mozambique, if you are caught hunting animals that are deemed endangered, you will be arrested and charged with Poaching. Also not to mention, that people are starting to view hunting trophies as an abomination because it is pushing animals closer to becoming endangered and extinct because its purpose is just to kill animals just for body parts (Banning).

In brief, humanity has added more to the problem of extinction rather than solve it;

they killed off a huge number of species, their lack of care has also caused plants to die which in turn put other species at the risk of extinction, and they only started to realize this. Unless humanity starts to care less about what it wants and more so what Earth needs, we will only add to the problem.

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