

EXTINCTION AND BIODIVERSITY LOSS IN CAMEROON

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Course : Biodiversity And It Measurement

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General Background of Cameroon

- Cameroon is a country located midway between Central and West Africa, often described as “Africa in miniature ”because of its diverse geography, culture, and climate.
- It borders Nigeria to the west, Chad to the north, the Central African Republic to the East, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and the Republic of the Congo to the south.
- Its coastline lies along the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean.
- It has a surface area of 472,710 square kilometers. With a water area of 2,730 square kilometers.

THE MAP OF CAMEROON



What is Biodiversity

- **Biodiversity** is the variety of all living organisms on Earth, including differences **within species (genetic diversity)**, **between species (species diversity)**, and **between ecosystems (ecosystem diversity)** (Wilson, 1992)

What is Extinction?

- **Globally extinct** – no individuals remain anywhere.
- **Extinct in the wild** – survive only in captivity.
- **Locally extinct (extirpated)** – lost from one area.
- **Ecologically extinct** – too few to perform ecological role.
- **Cameroon Example:**
 - Northern black rhino subspecies became extinct in Cameroon before global extinction.

Why This Topic Matters

- We are living in a period of rapid biodiversity loss.
- Extinction rates today are higher than natural background rates.
- Cameroon is one of Africa's biodiversity hotspots.
- Biodiversity loss threatens ecosystems, livelihoods, and future generations.
- **N/B:** Cameroon is often called "Africa in miniature" because of its ecological diversity. This makes extinction here especially serious.

Cameroon As A Biodiversity Hotspot

- Located in Central Africa.
- Contains: The Congo Basin rainforest, Coastal mangroves, Savannas Montane forests.
- High endemism in Mount Cameroon and Western Highlands.
- Major protected areas:
 - Dja Faunal Reserve
 - Korup National Park
 - Waza National Park

Past Mass Extinctions (Global Context)

- 5 natural mass extinctions in Earth's history.
- Most severe: Permian extinction (250 million years ago).
- Dinosaurs extinct at end of Cretaceous (65 million years ago).
- **Key Point:**
Today's extinction is human-caused, unlike past natural events.

The Current Human-Caused Mass Extinction

- Main drivers in Cameroon:
- Deforestation
- Illegal wildlife trade
- Agricultural expansion
- Mining
- Climate change
- Infrastructure development
- Cameroon is experiencing the **6th mass extinction** driven by humans.



Threatened Species in Cameroon

- Cross river gorillas; Critically Endangered
- African forest elephant – Critically Endangered
- Drill monkey – Endangered
- African grey parrot – Heavily trafficked

Socioeconomic Causes of Biodiversity Loss

- Poverty and reliance on bushmeat
- Weak law enforcement
- Political instability in Anglophone regions
- Population growth
- International demand for timber and wildlife

Consequences of Extinction in Cameroon

- Loss of ecosystem services
- Reduced tourism potential
- Climate regulation loss
- Cultural heritage loss
- Food insecurity
- Example:
Forest loss increases flooding and soil erosion.

Conservation Efforts in Cameroon

- National parks and reserves
- Anti-poaching patrols
- Community forestry programs
- International support (WWF, IUCN)
- Protected areas like:
 - Dja Faunal Reserve (UNESCO World Heritage Site)



What Must Be Done Urgently

- Strengthen environmental laws
- Promote sustainable agriculture
- Support alternative livelihoods
- Reforestation programs
- Environmental education

Conclusion

- Cameroon is rich in biodiversity.
- Extinction rates are increasing due to human activity.
- Habitat loss is the major driver.
- Without urgent action, many endemic species will disappear.
- Conservation is essential for sustainable development.