



The Future of Life

By Edward O. Wilson

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One of the world's most important scientists, Edward O. Wilson is also an abundantly talented writer who has twice won the Pulitzer Prize. In this, his most personal and timely book to date, he assesses the precarious state of our environment, examining the mass extinctions occurring in our time and the natural treasures we are about to lose forever. Yet, rather than eschewing doomsday prophecies, he spells out a specific plan to save our world while there is still time. His vision is a hopeful one, as economically sound as it is environmentally necessary. Eloquent, practical and wise, this book should be read and studied by anyone concerned with the fate of the natural world.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

The eminent Harvard naturalist and Pulitzer Prize winner Edward Wilson marshals all the prodigious powers of his intellect and imagination in this impassioned call to ensure the future of life. Opening with an imagined conversation with Henry David Thoreau at Walden Pond, he writes that he has come "to explain to you, and in reality to others and not least to myself, what has happened to the world we both have loved." Based on a love affair with the natural world that spans 70 years, Wilson combines lyrical descriptions with dire warnings and remarkable stories of flora and fauna on the edge of extinction with hard economics. How many species are we really losing? Is environmentalism truly contrary to economic development? And how can we save the planet? Wilson has penned an eloquent plea for the need for a global land ethic and offers the strategies necessary to ensure life on earth based on foresight, moral courage, and the best tools that science and technology can provide. -- *Lesley Reed*

From Publishers Weekly

Legendary Harvard biologist Wilson (*On Human Nature*; *The Ants*; etc.) founded sociobiology, the controversial branch of evolutionary biology, and won the Pulitzer Prize twice. This volume, his manifesto to the public at large, is a meditation on the splendor of our biosphere and the dangers we pose to it. In graceful, expressive and vigorous prose, Wilson argues that the challenge of the new century will be "to raise the poor to a decent standard of living worldwide while preserving as much of the rest of life as possible." For as America consumes and the Third World tries to keep up, we lose biological diversity at an alarming rate. But the "trajectory" of species loss depends on human choice. If current levels of consumption continue, half the planet's remaining species will be gone by mid-century. Wilson argues that the "great dilemma of environmental reasoning" stems from the conflict between environmentalism and economics, between long-term and short-term values. Conservation, he writes, is necessary for our long-term health and prosperity. Loss of biodiversity translates into economic losses to agriculture, medicine and the biotech industries. But the "bottleneck" of overpopulation and overconsumption can be safely navigated: adequate resources exist, and in the end, success or failure depends upon an ethical decision. Global conservation will succeed or fail depending on the cooperation between government, science and the private sector, and on the interplay of biology, economics and diplomacy. "A civilization able to envision God and to embark on the colonization of space," Wilson concludes, "will surely find the way to save the integrity of this planet and the magnificent life it harbors."

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From Library Journal

Every day hundreds of plant, animal, or bacterial species become extinct. All this is due to the human species and its pattern of mass ecological destruction. This hardly new idea is the basic premise of *The Future of Life*. Unfortunately, while the book is full of heart-tugging stories about the last days of a dying species, it has few useful suggestions. For example, Hawaii is described as a mosquito-free garden of Eden before the first Polynesian settlers arrived. The arrival of man apparently turned it into a rat- and pig-infested place where even the native snails are cannibalized by foreign invaders. Although Wilson describes a few minor victories, he obviously believes that the aliens are winning; the solutions he suggests are largely political and protective. There are many charming descriptions of unusual places and species. Still, many listeners may find themselves fast-forwarding through the long outlines of organizational activities. Despite the many flaws, this combination of Wilson, a popular science author, with Ed Begley Jr., a well-known performer

with a particularly mellifluous and expressive voice, should be in demand among nonfiction listeners. Recommended for moderate to large audiobook collections. I. Pour-El, Des Moines Area Community Coll., Boone, IA
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Micheal Taylor:

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