

Book review:

Gregor Klaus, Jörg Schmill, Bernhard Schmid, Peter J. Edwards:
Biologische Vielfalt, Erkenntnisse aus dem Schweizer Biodiversitätsprojekt.
Birkhäuser, Basel, 2001, ISBN 3-7643-6195-6, 38,00 sFr

Our environment is subject to dramatic changes, which do not only affect the global changes of climate and composition/distribution of prerequisites for life such as water or oxygen. In addition, biodiversity or the complexity of living species is endangered to lose its stability. Despite the ability of man to create his own "nature" by breeding plants and animals, the natural biodiversity seems to be a fundamental condition for human life. Research on biodiversity is just in its childhood, and still far away from general practical recommendations or applications of basic laws. To start with, research on its present status seems to be justified, which means analysis and collection of all living subjects in relation to the geographic presence. In 1992 the Swiss Parliament funded a project on biodiversity in Switzerland. The research results are presented in this textbook. It describes fundamental aspects of biodiversity and its meaning for human life, its association with climate, pollution, overpopulation, strategies to protect certain species, considerations on agriculture and biodiversity, and social aspects such as financing or political influence. The general aspects are clearly set up by practical experiences and examples of individual species. The textbook contains numerous color images and photographs of sceneries, plants, flowers, endangered animals. These examples are used to explain theoretical considerations, and to serve for individual practical solutions. The textbook is easy to read, and can be recommended to all colleagues who want to know theoretical and practical terms of live interaction, demonstrated on the specific conditions in Switzerland.

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