Why should you care about Biodiversity?

The importance of Biodiversity is profound and far-reaching
From the inherent value of Earth's species in their natural habitats, to the medicinal, nutritional and economic benefits provided by individual species, to the invaluable role of ecosystems in controlling erosion, cleansing the air and water, storing carbon, enriching soil, and pollinating crops

Our everyday lives are dependent on Biodiversity

Food

- A mere 20 species provide about 90% of the world's food. All major food crops (including corn, wheat, rice and soybeans) depend on the introduction of new strains from the wild
- Fish and other marine animals provide 20% of animal protein consumed, at a value of $50-100 billion annually

Nature's Pharmacy

- Plants have contributed to more than 7,000 compounds produced by the pharmaceutical industry (including ingredients in heart drugs, laxatives, anti-cancer agents, hormones, contraceptives, diuretics, antibiotics, decongestants, analgesics, anaesthetics, ulcer treatments and anti-parasitic compounds)
    - One in four of all prescription drugs dispensed by western pharmacists is likely to contain ingredients derived from plants
- More than 3,000 antibiotics, such as penicillin—which comes from a certain type of mold—were originally derived from microorganisms

Natural Resources

- Thousands of natural products are used routinely by industry to produce everyday goods
- More than 7,000 species of plants are cultivated or harvested from the wild
- Consider the number of fibers, building materials, and other natural resources we depend upon
    - Compounds from seaweeds are used in plastics, polishes, paints, deodorants, detergents, fire-extinguishing foams, lubricants, meat preservatives, to name a few among the hundreds of products

Air and Water purification

- Green plants take in carbon dioxide and pump out the oxygen that we breathe
    - Did you know that a mature leafy tree produces as much oxygen in a season as 10 people inhale in a year?
- Plants, animals and microorgasnisms in wetlands act as sponges to filter sediments and toxins from inflowing waters

Pollination

- Insects pollinate agricultural crops worth $6-12 billion a year in the USA

Disease Control

- Natural enemies (predators and parasites) of disease carrying organisms (for example: ticks and mosquitos) control diseases such as malaria, Lyme disease, hantavirus and cholera
    - Did you know that the presence of Western Fence Lizard (commonly called "Blue-belly" or "Swift") reduces the incidence of Lyme Disease in its range?