

PREFACE

Natural ecosystems provide the basic conditions without which humanity could not survive. Good and services provided by ecosystems include for example provision of food, fibre and fuel, purification of water and air, cultural and aesthetic benefits, stabilization and moderation of the Earth's climate, generation and renewal of soil fertility, including nutrient cycling or maintenance of genetic resources as key inputs to crop varieties and livestock breeds, medicines, and other products. However, the ability of biological diversity to continue performing these services is seriously threatened since some species are being seriously deteriorated, and in some cases destroyed. While loss of species has always occurred as a natural phenomenon, the pace of extinction has accelerated dramatically as a result of human activity. Ecosystems are being fragmented or eliminated, and innumerable species are in decline or already extinct. The transition to sustainable development requires a shift in public attitudes as to what is an acceptable use of nature. This can only happen if people have the right information, skills, and organizations for understanding and dealing with biodiversity issues. The book is divided into nine chapters, which are all related to endangered species research studies. Different research groups present here scientific studies and research works on the topic of plant conservation biology, World's threatened species and climate change effects on population dynamics. Transferring information and knowledge within the society is crucial for fighting biological deterioration. In addition, promoting the sustainable use of biodiversity will be of growing importance for maintaining biodiversity in the years and decades to come.

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