

Bitesize GCSE Science - Biology

Evolution, extinction and biodiversity

Nicola Hallot from Knowsley Safari Park on extinction

Extinction is a totally natural process, the dinosaurs that very famously died out 65 million years ago had nothing to do with humans because we weren't around then.

In the last 100 years or so the extinction rate has shot up and now about a thousand times higher than what it should be and the two major driving forces behind that are poaching and habitat loss.

We have a variety of endangered animals at Knowsley including tigers, elephants, Pere David's deer, Bactrian camel and scimitar-horned oryx.

Zoos and safari parks across Europe have to work together to maintain biodiversity within their populations, no one single collection can manage a species just by themselves. So there is someone called a stud book keeper for each animal and he has on record where every animal of that species is and who it is related to and then he will call zoos and safari parks up and recommend who should breed with who.

This maintains a really good genetic diversity to make sure that the population is nice and healthy and it also means that we have got a sustainable population.