

Study: More animals might face extinction

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An Imperial College London study warns that human development may soon place many animals at risk of extinction.

The study identifies 20 regions of the world where the risk of extinction might soon arise, the BBC reported Tuesday. Those regions include the Caribbean islands, Greenland, the Siberian tundra, and parts of Southeast Asia.

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, an attempt to audit the Earth's ecological health, says extinctions are occurring at 100 to 1,000 times the normal background rate. Researchers determined one-third of the Earth's amphibians, a fifth of mammals and an eighth of all birds are threatened with extinction.

The MEA also concluded that although humanity is the cause, humanity will ultimately be among the losers, the BBC said, since reducing biodiversity will affect societies at a number of levels, including compromising "ecosystem services" such as fresh water and biodegrading bacteria.

The Imperial College London study appears in the current issue of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

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