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Subject: Re: PABIODIV Human Footprint
Date: Tue, 5 Nov 2002 16:39:58 -0500 (EST)

A little bit of knowledge is a dangerous and contentious thing. The problem is that there's a spectrum of "wildlife species" ranging from commensals dependent on man (house mice, Norway rats etc.) to habitat generalists (like most of the species mentioned by Larry) that thrive in fragmented and otherwise repeatedly disturbed (tree harvests and farming) landscapes to habitat specialists or species that outright will not get along with humans or what they do. The Grizzly bear and passenger pigeon come to mind. It's this latter group that's finding fewer and fewer friendly (fairly wild, natural disturbance) landscapes. Note, the gypsy moth, chestnut blight, and a host of invasives do not qualify as natural disturbance.

The public generally has the impression that wildlife is doing OK. If anything, some species are too numerous, they're pests. Hence the growing pest control industry. This public attitude, often based on personal experience, inadvertently subordinates messages about species in trouble. Few people "see" a troubled species. There's little personal experience. There's no problem.

Larry represents the majority.

A Perversity of Diversity

Seagulls at the 7-11
Are outnumbered by the tree of heaven.

Purple loosestrife, a bazillion or more,
Chokes out natives by the score.

Dead and dying native oak.
We imported gypsy moth, no joke!

There are English sparrows in every park
Along with zebra mussels and big fat carp

There are starlings, crows,
And multiflora rose,
And feral cats
And Norway rats,

Son-of-a-niche,
We're species rich!

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