

The author's main conclusion is that he should take more action in biodiversity conservation. He first examines potential reasons why there has been inaction in conservation, namely that it might slow economic growth, leading to political instability, and create conflict with indigenous communities. However, he concludes that biodiversity conservation remains a pressing priority as biodiversity safeguards ecosystems and contributes to treatments for diseases. Ultimately, the author rightly articulates the value of biodiversity conservation, but his argument is weakened by a failure to weigh his claimed beliefs against the detriments raised by the detractors.

The author correctly notes that biodiverse ecosystems are important for the environment — pollination, water purification, and soil fertility are all important functions played by flora and fauna in the ecosystem. In fact, loss of biodiversity often has ripple effects across the entire ecosystem — given the highly interconnected nature of the food chain, threats that decrease the population of plants often threaten animals in higher trophic levels. This is why a small rise in temperature has the potential to wipe out 25% of species if global warming is uncontained. Additionally, the author is also right that preserving biodiversity could contribute to future treatments for diseases — many pharmaceutical companies like Pfizer and Bayer often reference the traditional herbal remedies for diseases, studying plants with pharmaceutical properties in the early stages of the drug development process. Hence, the author's argument has some credit — he rightly recognises the benefits of preserving biodiversity.

That said, the argument's main weakness is a failure to compare the benefits and costs of biodiversity conservation. Structurally, the argument merely lists potential costs before 'counterbalancing' them with benefits — there is no reasoning for the dogmatically asserted conclusion that biodiversity conservation is more important. In fact, there are compelling reasons to believe the costs of biodiversity conservation are severe too — lower GDP could mean millions of lost jobs in America, where unemployment is already

skyrocketing today. Land use conflict with indigenous communities could mean the eradication of traditional practices and cultural heritage, such as Inuit seal hunting. Should Alaskan lands become protected reserves. Thus, it is not trivially the case that these harms are less serious than the benefits — the author needs to actively show that.

Perhaps the underlying reason for the argument's weakness is its rather extreme, unqualified conclusion vis-à-vis biodiversity conservation. Certainly, it is an important cause to fight for, but action to conserve biodiversity should also be balanced against measures to mitigate the negative externalities and impacts of such conservation efforts. In many cases, this is the reason for the ostensibly 'slow' progress on biodiversity conservation — governments are consulting with indigenous communities before deciding on new nature reserves, or providing transition schemes for workers affected by new conservation laws to move to new industries. Thus, slow, considered action in conservation is not necessarily a bad thing, inasmuch as it allows for better tradeoffs to be made on conservation — it is this nuanced recognition of the need for prudent rather than fast action that the author is lacking.

Ultimately, even though the author makes valid points on the benefits of conservation, his hasty dismissal of the real negative consequences of conservation without much comparison against his benefits renders the argument rather unpersuasive overall.

AO2: 9/10    AO3: 5/5    Total: 14/15

### **Examiner's Comments**

Good response that shows good understanding of the author's argument and its main weaknesses. The issue of prioritisation is well-considered and the reasoning given for why the individual points made by the author aren't wrong per se, but not weighed to fully support his main conclusion.