

The magnitude of biodiversity and its decline: are we in a sixth mass extinction event?

Date 7th Oct (Fri.)

Time 16:00 (UTC+8)

Venue Zoom



You can also email us to require the Zoom link
(check SBS website → NEWS & EVENTS)

Abstract

Dramatic increases in estimates of the number of species on Earth, loss of tropical forests, and extinction rates in the 1980s were key drivers for the 'biodiversity crisis'. Some suggested there could be 30 million or even 100 million species on Earth and that species loss was 10% per decade. The debate on global species estimates has largely focused on insects. In the last decade, new methods of estimating global species richness have been developed and existing ones improved using more appropriate statistical tools and new data. New estimates suggest that globally there are 5.5 million species of insects and that previous estimates of 30 million or more are statistically unlikely. With only 1 million insect species named, this suggests that 80% are undiscovered. Unbiased DNA studies of previously well-studied insect fauna indicate that 1-2% of species may be truly cryptic.

All are welcome!



Prof Nigel Stork is an entomologist and ecologist. He was a pioneer of forest canopy studies. After studying at the University of Manchester, he became a researcher at London's Natural History Museum in 1980 and was a lead author on UNEP's Global Biodiversity Assessment and the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. He moved to Australia in 1995 to lead the national Rainforest Cooperative Research Centre. He has worked at James Cook University, Melbourne University and Griffith University before retiring in 2016. Professor Stork has had a long involvement with the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation as a Council Member, President and an Honorary Fellow.