

Study Questions, Week 8

Topics for the Week:

Plants & Animals

Readings for the Week:

Video: "Costa Rica Counts the Future"

McPhee, pp. 221–272

Biodiversity Websites:

<http://research.amnh.org/biodiversity/center/what.html>
<http://wri.igc.org/biodiv/>
<http://endangered.fws.gov/>
<http://www.biodiversityhotspots.org/xp/Hotspots/hotspotsScience/>
<http://www.mdwfp.com/museum/downloads/tandelist.pdf>

Questions:

- (1) A basic question addressed by the video "Costa Rica Counts the Future" is articulated by an interviewee, who asks: "how do we move beyond an economic logic that sees unsustainability as optimal?" Provide evidence that supports this contention. What is Costa Rica doing to counter this emphasis on economic logic?
- (2) According to the video, what is the primary insight that distinguishes ecological economics from standard economics? What are some consequences of this difference?
- (3) What are some of the important challenges that Costa Rica faces as it tries to move its economy in a sustainable direction?
- (4) What are some of the groups targeted by government policies aimed at developing a sustainable economy? How have they been affected by these policies?
- (5) How might each of the following contribute to a more sustainable future for Costa Rica?
 - cooperatives
 - "luxury" crops (e.g. orchids)
 - medicinal plants
 - ecotourism
 - biodiversity
 - secondary forests
- (6) Explain some of the geologic structures and processes that occur in Southern California (e.g. alluvial fans, tectonic plates, mountains, flood plains, earthquakes).

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What is the result of these processes? How do they affect debris flows? How well does the average Southern Californian understand these processes?

(7) What factors have led to population growth in Southern California? What were the primary industries? Why did people choose to live where they did?

(8) What is meant by the term *biodiversity*? Why is biodiversity important?

(9) In what ways is biodiversity threatened? Is this a serious problem?

(10) What are the criteria for listing a species as *endangered*? As *threatened*? How big a problem are endangered species at the federal and state level?

(11) What is a biodiversity *hotspot*? Why was this concept created? What are some problems with this approach to biodiversity protection?