

The Marin Biodiversity Corridor Initiative (MBCI)

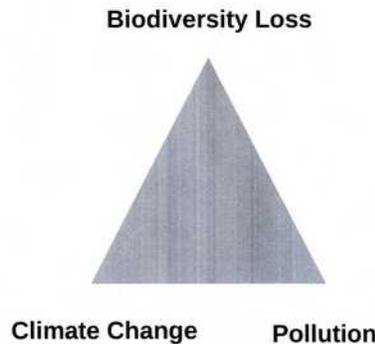
The Global Biodiversity Crisis

As far as we know, earth is the only planet with life, but we are losing it fast. According to the United Nations *Making Peace with Nature* report of February 2021, **biodiversity loss** is one of the three main interlinked threats to our planet, along with **climate change** and **pollution**.



Earth & Moon

Bill Anders - NASA



Three Global Threats



United Nations Report

Biodiversity loss, like climate change and pollution, has a **de-stabilizing effect** on the whole world. Pest outbreaks, pandemics, and drops in production and efficiency of ecosystems are all results of biodiversity loss. Although we may still see many living things around us, more and more these are populations of **generalist** species adapted to humans, such as Argentine ants, Norway rats and French broom. What we do not see are the many species and individuals that have gone. North America has lost 30% of its birds in the last fifty years, and numbers of the western monarch butterfly have dropped over 90% in only 20 years. A key reason is that the majority of species are **specialists**, shaped by millions of years of evolution to live only on certain food and in certain places. Human homogenization of the world, now aggravated by pollution and climate change, has been eliminating them steadily. This simplification is visible not only in the advance of the pavement of urban areas and the monocultures of agricultural ones. Even where ornamental plants are seen, they are usually of a few exotic species that do not provide food and shelter for our many specialist animal species. They are what may be termed “**wildlife food deserts.**”



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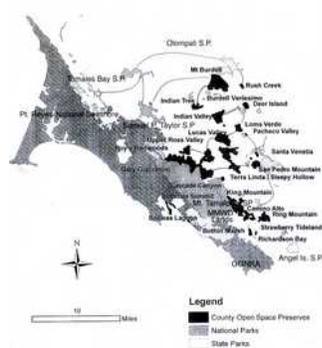


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Habitat Simplification and Wildlife Food Deserts – Urban, Rural and Suburban

Local Solutions in Marin

One solution to the biodiversity crisis has been called the “**spare**” approach. This is the designation of places where human activities are restricted. Over many years, Marin has benefited greatly from the creation of many parks and preserves. The new “30 x 30” initiative increases the promise of this approach by aiming to protect 30% of lands and waters statewide and nationally by 2030. Yet biodiversity continues to be lost, and this important approach cannot stand alone. Preserves will still be too few and fragmented to be a complete solution to the crisis. However they can be complemented by the “**share**” strategy. This seeks to integrate many of the lost specialist species into the places where humans live and work, restoring biodiversity and human appreciation for it at the same time. In fact, bits of sharing have popped up across Marin over the last few decades as habitat improvement projects have been undertaken by dedicated groups. With a little more encouragement, this growing network of projects can live up to its full potential as a local solution to the global problem. It can connect more preserves to each other and more people to nature. It can increase both local and global biodiversity.



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**“Spare” + “Share”
Preserves & Corridors**



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**Sharing Downtown
with Native Plants**



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**Madrone Leafminer
A Specialist Insect**



Alan Vernon

**Oak Titmouse
A Specialist Bird**

What MBCI Is and What it Does

MBCI is a collaborative of people from Marin conservation organizations. It has four focus groups that complement each other to form an integrated local response to the global biodiversity crisis:

Policy Group -- Raises awareness of biodiversity among public agencies and private institutions by encouraging adoption of goals and policies to promote it.

Project Group – Supports new on-the-ground local biodiversity projects through sharing of information and other resources.

Data Group – Gathers information and maintains a database and map to record individual and countywide progress.

Outreach and Education Group – Promotes public understanding of ecological and cultural connections through diverse educational activities.

