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Are we currently in an extinction event?

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AI Overview

Yes, Earth is widely considered to be entering or experiencing its sixth mass extinction

(known as the Anthropocene

or Holocene extinction)

, driven primarily by human activities like habitat destruction, climate change, and overexploitation.

The Evidence of Crisis

- **Extinction Rates:** Current species extinction rates are estimated to be **100 to 1,000 times higher** than the natural background rate (with some estimates reaching 10,000 times higher).
- **Vertebrate Losses:** A study published via the Stanford Report notes that land-dwelling vertebrate genera are vanishing 35 times faster than the baseline average over the last million years.
- **Ecosystem Shift:** Human activity and livestock now dominate the planet's biomass, with human-associated mammals and poultry making up the vast majority of vertebrate life.

The Scientific Debate

While most scientists agree we are facing a severe biodiversity crisis, researchers debate the strict definition of a "mass extinction":

- **The "Yes" Camp:** Biologists like Gerardo Ceballos argue that the sheer speed of contemporary species and population loss matches the urgency and scale of past geological crises. Organizations like the World Wildlife Fund emphasize that interconnected losses are already breaking down vital life-support systems.
- **The "Not Yet" Camp:** Some recent analyses (such as studies in PLOS Biology) suggest that while species-level extinctions are alarmingly high, the loss of higher taxonomic groups (like entire families and orders) has not yet reached the dramatic 75% thresholds seen in past events like the demise of the dinosaurs. However, many in this group still warn that we are on a fast track to reach those levels if trends continue.

Would you like to explore specific animal groups (such as amphibians or insects) that are hardest hit, or look at **conservation goals** like the 30x30 initiative?

Holocene extinction - Wikipedia
Wikipedia

The Sixth Mass Extinction | WWF
World Wildlife Fund

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www.worldwildlife.org › Resources › Explainers

What is the sixth mass extinction and what can we do about it? - WWF

Experts now believe we're in the midst of a sixth mass extinction. What's causing the sixth mass extinction? Unlike previous extinction events caused by natural ...

en.wikipedia.org › wiki › Holocene_extinction

Holocene extinction - Wikipedia

The Holocene or Anthropocene extinction is an ongoing extinction event caused by human activity during the current geological epoch, impacting diverse ...

Overview · Historic extinction · Contemporary extinction

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Are we living in during a mass extinction event? : r/askscience - Reddit

Oct 22, 2011 · The short answer is we are in an extinction event right now and it may very well become a mass extinction event. It really all depends on how ...

Do we have any information on the timeline of the sixth mass ...

Are we witnessing a 6th mass extinction? : r/Dinosaurs - Reddit

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What is mass extinction and are we facing a sixth one?

Mass extinctions change the face of life on Earth. The current rate of biodiversity loss may indicate we are facing a sixth mass extinction event.

evolution.berkeley.edu › mass-extinction › the-earths-sixth-mass-extinction

The Earth's sixth mass extinction - Understanding Evolution

Have humans pushed the Earth into its sixth mass extinction? Evidence suggests that we are well on our way to that outcome, if not in a mass extinction already.

www.dw.com › what-earths-sixth-mass-extinction-event-means-for-humans

What Earth's sixth mass extinction event means for humans - DW.com

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Questioning the sixth mass extinction - ScienceDirect.com

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