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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed bill for protection of biodiversity within South Australia. I am a (retired) professional biologist, and an active member of conservation groups, and as such am already convinced of the vital need, for both the sake of the planet, and of humanity, for conservation of biodiversity and of 'wild' places.
I have consulted your 'YourSay' homepage, and would like to congratulate DEW on a really excellent summing up of the need for biodiversity. To me, it seemed a first-rate piece for public education.

One point that was not touched on, and which I think pertinent given the recent human pandemic, is that the risk of disease is greater in a monoculture (eg cereal production) than in species diverse situations. Obviously disease (viral, bacterial fungal) occurs in biodiverse systems, but the risk of a pandemic is reduced. In addition, as the home page pointed out, biodiversity provides a vast genetic pool, essential for developing new medicines, crops, and technologies (including pesticides).

I note that the 2023 survey of Australian people found that an overwhelming majority support the need for greater protection of biodiversity. I would add that there is also a need for more funding for basic research to identify what is actually out there. I was a nematode (round-worm) taxonomist, who worked closely with entomologists, and I would like to give the example of an Honours student, who was studying at the Waite Agricultural Research Institute at the time I was there, and who one afternoon walked out of the main building to cross Waite Road. As he walked, he noticed an interesting looking insect on the leaf of a eucalypt, and collected it. This turned out to represent a whole new genus of insects. This example illustrates just how much we still have to learn about the animals and plants of this world, including South Australia. Taxonomy has been an unfashionable area of research for some time now, but underpins biological sciences, and as such requires much more funding.

I look forward to reading the draft Bill for conservation of biodiversity.

Yours sincerely

Kerrie Davies (Dr).