

In focus: the sixth mass extinction -- the future has come, not far away

On July 21, 2022, the extinction of Chinese paddlefish (*Psephurus gladius*) was declared. According to statistics, 110 species and subspecies of mammals and 139 species and subspecies of birds have disappeared from the earth in the 20th century, and 593 species of birds, 400 species of beasts, 209 species of amphibians and reptiles and 20,000 species of higher plants are endangered. According to a 2019 report by the UN Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), about 1 million species are now threatened with extinction, many of them within a few decades, more than at any time in human history.

The Earth has experienced five mass extinctions in its 4.6 billion years of history. The extinction of the dinosaurs, which occurred in the Cretaceous period 65 million years ago, was the most recent mass extinction to humans. Now the Earth has entered the sixth mass extinction of life, and the development pattern of industrial civilization -- excessive exploitation and utilization of resources and inexhaustible pursuit of profits -- is still accelerating the extinction.

Many people do not yet understand the extent of the survival predicament facing humanity. At the UN summit meeting held in the Millennium, 189 countries including China signed the UN Millennium Declaration, which planned to complete eight tasks in 15 years. The seventh task is about the environment, under which the B sub-task is: slowing down the rate of biodiversity loss. Unfortunately, this task was not completed by China and other countries when the answer sheets were submitted in 2015.

The future has come. Tomorrow is today. The distance is close.

This issue focuses on the topic of species extinction and its causes, calling for more people to pay attention to the necessary prerequisite for sustainable development, namely, a deep understanding of the relationship between man and nature, that is, only under a harmonious symbiotic relationships can life survive and grow. It is urgent to strengthen biodiversity protection and promote ecological progress.

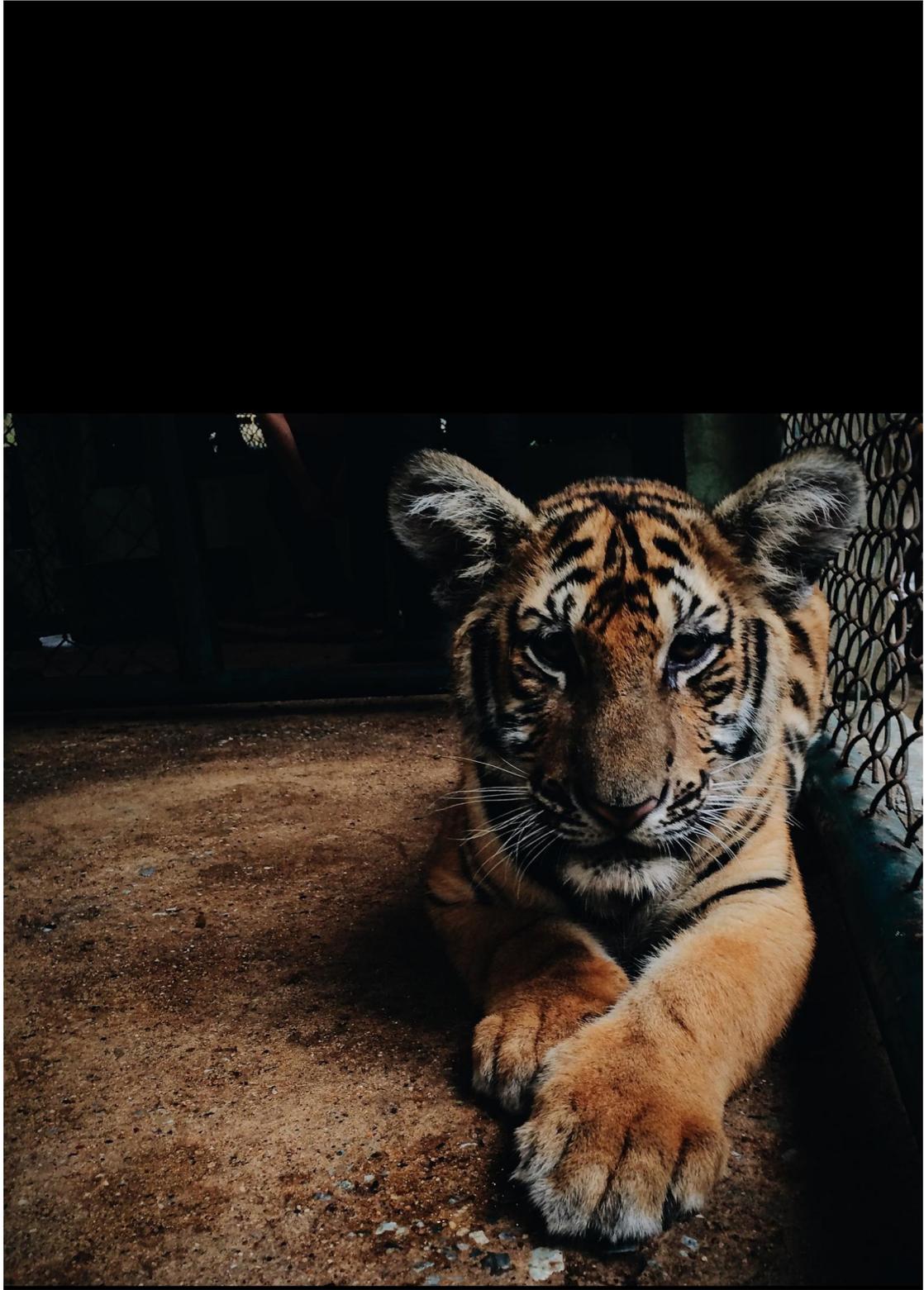


Photo source: Can be drawn

