

Discover Biodiversity Webisode Narrative Description

[Ben walking home from school approaches Jody and Jenny sitting together on an outdoor bench]

Jenny: Hey. What's up, Ben?

Ben: Hey, Jenny.

Jenny: I know that look. Still haven't figured out your science project?

Ben: Not yet.

Jody: What's your project about?

Ben: Biodi-something-or-other.

Jenny: Biodiversity.

Jody: Mm.

Jenny: Big subject.

Ben: Might as well be advanced particle physics.

Jody: That's it.

Ben: Huh?

Jody: Take the big subject, biodiversity, and break it up into smaller, easy-to-understand particles.

Ben: Well, thanks. That's one moral problem solved. Now pardon me while I go cure cancer.

[Ben walks away, leaving the two girls on the bench]

[Hinterland Who's Who Intro featuring images of Ben and Jenny interacting with different forms of wildlife]

[Image of Connor appears on Ben's computer monitor as Ben sleeps at his desk]

Connor: Yo!

[Ben wakes and looks at the monitor, slightly confused]

Ben: Huh?

Connor: Remember me? Connor Sims. I used to work the WhoTube. A ladybug costume? The babes loved it. How's your project coming? Relax, dude. I've got a message for you.

Ben: For me?

Connor: Yeah. Tonight you'll be visited by three ghosts.

Ben: No thanks.

Connor: They're nice, and they'll help you understand biodiversity.

Ben: That's okay.

Connor: You just sleep on it.

[Ben put his head back down on the desk and begins to dream]

[Jenny appears to Ben as silvery ghostly image]

Ghost of Biodiversity Lost: Hey.

Ben: Jenny?

Ghost of Biodiversity Lost: Nope. I am the ghost of biodiversity lost.

Ben: Okay.

Ghost of Biodiversity Lost: What is biodiversity?

Ben: Uh, a big word?

[See It Through the WhoTube logo Bio Diversity]

[Animated cartoon featuring pictures of living things]

Ghost of Biodiversity Lost: When you see it through the WhoTube, it's two words, biological and diversity.

Ben: Biological means life.

Ghost of Biodiversity Lost: Right. And diversity?

Ben: Uh...

Ghost of Biodiversity Lost: Diversity means variety, a mix of different things.

Ben: So biodiversity means a mix of living things? So what do you mean by biodiversity lost?

Ghost of Biodiversity Lost: I mean some of the variety is gone. There are fewer species in the mix of living things, and that means an unhealthy ecosystem.

[Pan across a field to a reptile and baby owls]

Ben: But there must be thousands of species out here. What difference does it make if a few disappear?

Ghost of Biodiversity Lost: Check this out. A black-footed ferret. They're being reintroduced to our prairie grassland you know.

[Man releasing a black-footed ferret from a cage]

Ben: Reintroduced?

[Images of a black-footed ferret and black-tailed prairie dogs in the grasslands]

Ghost of Biodiversity Lost: They were wiped out in Canada when their main source of food, black-tailed prairie dogs disappeared. As grasslands became farmland, black-tailed prairie dogs became scarce, so no food for ferrets, no ferrets.

Ben: So the loss of one species has a ripple effect on other species?

Ghost of Biodiversity Lost: That's it.

Ben: But I thought it was natural for things to go extinct.

Ghost of Biodiversity Lost: It is, but some species are disappearing way faster than the natural rate, partly because of the number of people and the way we live.

Ben: Ouch.

Ghost of Biodiversity Lost: Well, enough of that. It's time for...

[Ben dressed as rock music show host, complete with black wig and moustache]

Please welcome your Band Land host, Ben Harris.

Ben: Now what? Err, yeah, welcome. Hey, guys. Oh, sorry. You guys must be the ghosts of diversity, what, forgotten, ignored?

[Image of four guitarists dressed in rock and roll attire]

Ghosts of Biodiversity Threatened: We're the Ghosts of Biodiversity Threatened. But we like to call ourselves The Threatened because it's a cool band name. Ready, guys? One, two, three, four.

Ben: Whoa, hey. Hold on, hold on. You can't have a band with just bass players. You guys are like a hockey team with nothing but goalies. Ah, right. Bands need different kinds of musicians. Ecosystems need all kinds of different species.

Ghosts of Biodiversity Threatened: Because?

Ben: Because all living things depend on each other, like the black-footed ferret and the prairie dog.

Ghosts of Biodiversity Threatened: Yes.

And here's another great example, pollinators. Without bees and other pollinators to carry pollen between plants, fruits and seeds would not grow, and we'd lose some important sources of food.

[Images of insects on various flowers]

There are lots of good examples of how plants and animals and even ecosystems depend on each other.

Ben, pick one.

Ben: I don't know.

Ghosts of Biodiversity Threatened: Come on, give it a try.

Ben: Okay. The beaver, a great symbol of Canada.

Ghosts of Biodiversity Threatened: That's a great one, dude.

[Images of a beavers swimming, building and interacting with each other]

The beaver, the largest member of the rodent family in North America. Beavers are probably best known for their construction skills. They often create dams to create ponds where they live. Trapping has reduced their numbers, but beavers have made a comeback in many parts of Canada. And that's a good thing. Some biologists believe that drought conditions in some areas may be caused by the loss of beaver habitat. Their ecosystems are models of biodiversity, home to all kinds of life, all of which rely on the beaver for the wetlands it creates.

[Ben staggers into his bathroom and looks in the mirror]

Ben: Beavers and bass players, ferrets. What a crazy dream.

[Ben's mirror image changes to a ghost representation of himself]

Ghost of Future Biodiversity: It's not over yet.

Ben: Hey! You can't talk to me. You're me.

Ghost of Future Biodiversity: The Ghost of Future Biodiversity.

Ben: Wow. The future of biodiversity. That's a big responsibility.

Ghost of Future Biodiversity: True. But I've got an idea.

[Ben is finishing up his project as Jenny and Jody approach]

Jenny: Hey. You look like you've been wrestling ghosts.

Jody: Did your project keep you up all night?

Ben: Well, I had a good talk with myself. I decided to take the big subject, biodiversity, and break it up into small, easy to understand particles.

Jody: There's an original idea.

Ben: Just like my project. You ready for it?

Jody: Maybe.

Ben: First we have to play "Do you Know".

[Ben gestures his hands in quotation marks]

Jenny: Your life is just one big game show, isn't it?

Ben: Okay. How many different animal species is there on earth?

Jenny: I don't know.

Jody: Nobody knows. I do know that over a million and a half have been identified.

Ben: Yeah. But you probably don't know that the total number is between 12 and 118 million.

Jenny: You mean there are more than a hundred million species that haven't been identified yet?

Ben: Correct. So I say it's time to stand up for what we don't know.

Jenny: Or lie down and get some sleep.

[Ben opens his presentation board, showing his project to Jenny and Jody]

Ben: Behold, my brilliant poster campaign on the millions of reasons to preserve biodiversity. Let's stop destroying ecosystems because we don't know what species might be lost; we don't know if they might lead us to a cure for cancer or a new food source.

[Images of wildlife pictures from Ben's projects, including a bird, racoon, polar bears, water fowl and insects]

Jenny: So your poster is about what you don't know?

Jody: I think it's a great idea. It'll help people understand all the biodiversity still to be discovered. And here's a few ways you can help.

[Students from Jean Vanier and St.-Laurent Academy Elementary & Junior High exploring the marsh]

Jenny: Protect a natural habitat in your community, like students at Jean Vanier Catholic School and St.-Laurent Academy Elementary & Junior High who have been study Ottawa's Mcoun Marsh since 2003.

[A mom and child read information posted along a trail]

Ben: Experience Canada's amazing biodiversity. The Trans-Canada Trail is an ideal place. It winds its way through every province and territory, and soon it will be the world's longest recreational trail, linking close to 1,000 communities.

[Mom and child in stroller walking on the Trans Canada Trail]

Jenny: Another way you can help is by planting native species of wild flowers.

[Images of various wildflowers]

[Jody, Jenny, and Ben stand together indoors]

Jody: Tell your friends and neighbours about the importance of biodiversity and the need to preserve it.

Jenny: Visit Hinterland Who's Who online to learn more about biodiversity.

Ben: And tell us your ideas for protecting it.

Jenny: And what you think of Who's WhoTube.

Jody: We love to read all your comments. And remember, no matter where you live in Canada, wildlife is close by, so get out and see it.

[Hinterland Who's WhoTube logo]