



I grew up on this river. It's fed by 3 lakes, and its 30-mile course is flanked by beaver ponds, cattail marshes, sedge meadows, shrub swamps, open bogs, grassy and shrub-sapling openings, mixed needle-leaf and broad-leaf forests, and lowland forests. These many habitats would make it one of the most diverse Natural Systems in the world, if not for the recent human history of logging, trapping, farming, and transporting invasive species.

The magnificent elm trees that once overhung the lower reaches where I still live, were lost to a disease hosted by a beetle that we inadvertently transported from Europe. The fungal disease itself came from an unrelated ecosystem on the far side of the planet. But this was just the latest example of our human impact. Many species were already disappearing as first rifles, then snowmobiles, chased away the timber wolves that kept populations in balance. Contrary to what we once thought, species become more diverse, not less diverse, when ecosystems are **consistently cropped by these 'top predators'**.

If it is indeed human nature to be always pushing the envelope, then consistency is not an option for us. Thus, neither is inter-dependency. Human 'harvesting' can't be relied upon from one government to the next, let alone for the lifetime of a species. And, unlike the wolf, we have nothing to give in return.