

图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

特殊的历史时刻/任林静主编.

北京: 中国人民大学出版社, 1999. 5

(大学生英语阅读系列丛书)

ISBN 7-300-03075-0/H·214

I. 特...

II. 任...

III. 环境科学-英语-高等学校-课外读物

IV. H319.4: X

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (1999) 第 08171 号

大学生英语阅读系列丛书

特殊的历史时刻

任林静 主编

出版发行: 中国人民大学出版社

(北京海淀路 157 号 邮编 100080)

发行部: 62514146 门市部: 62511369

总编室: 62511242 出版部: 62511239

E-mail: rendarx@263.net

经 销: 新华书店

印 刷: 北京市鑫鑫印刷厂

开本: 850×1168 毫米 1/32 印张: 10

1999 年 8 月第 1 版 1999 年 8 月第 1 次印刷

字数: 245 000

定价: 15.00 元

(图书出现印装问题, 本社负责调换)

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1. Clouds in the Coffee¹

咖啡背后的问题

As habitat shrinks, a shade-grown harvest² saves songbirds.

habitat songbird plantation biodiversity
species migrant raptor extinction ecosystem
fauna reptile conservationist

Morning *commuters*, struggling to stay awake and focus on the day's newspaper, probably don't spend a lot of time worrying where their cup of coffee comes from. They'd be surprised to learn that it was most likely picked by Central American workers earning less than a dollar a day in pesticide-intensive³, high-output factory farms. And that these full-sun farms⁴— virtual biological deserts — are swiftly replacing traditional eco-friendly shade farms⁵, which are *habitat havens* for migrant songbirds.

The close connection between songbirds and shade coffee plantations was first reported by American Museum of Natural History *ornithologist* Ludlow Griscom in the 1930s. He noted then that cof-

fee growers left much of the natural forest to shade their plants, and that birds and animals were little affected by the rise of the plantations. Fifty years later, University of California biologist Robert Seib did a *landmark* study of snake *diversity* in Guatemalan⁶ coffee farms, renewing the connection. A *spate* of recent studies has also shown a clear link between coffee production and bird biodiversity⁷. The conclusions are *unanimous*: Traditional shaded farms host high levels of biodiversity, but the new ultra-productive, chemically intensive “full-sun” farms are disasters for wildlife.

Beginning in the 1970s, biologists from the Interamerican Foundation for Tropical Research (FIIT) in Guatemala began surveying migratory songbirds, raptors, bats, reptiles and other fauna⁸ in coffee farms. There are about 250 species of birds that breed mainly in the *temperate* region of North America and winter mainly in the tropics, including *waterfowl*, *shorebirds*, raptors and songbirds. As they *funnel* down through Mexico and the narrow waist of the Central American *isthmus*, the birds are compressed into spaces much smaller than their breeding area. In 1996, for example, the Mexican conservation group Pronatura Veracruz counted 4.5 million raptors passing over a single town.

Scientists guess that between two and five billion birds make the annual journey. Some take the trip slowly, stopping frequently to rest and refuel, but many go the distance without stopping. The *blackpoll warbler*, for example, makes an incredible leap from Alaska⁹ to the Amazon. The birds have *fabulous navigation* skills, using landmarks, stars, *magnetic* fields and other clues to find their

way "home," sometimes to the same tree. But all too often the home tree has been replaced by a *mall* or housing development in the north or a cattle pasture in the south. The disappearance of the forest fits into a deadly mosaic¹⁰ that also includes nest *predation* by *cowbirds*, uncontrolled hunting and *pesticides*.

The coffee/bird connection is about songbirds — warblers, orioles, tanagers, flycatchers, thrushes, vireos and their forest — dependent cohorts¹¹. Some are clearly in decline. Others seem to be holding on¹². But no one doubts that unless current land — use trends are modified, the future of many of these songsters will be *bleak*.

Every year in Central America, a million acres of tropical forest are destroyed; Mexico suffers a similar loss. The reason that more bird *extinctions* have not been recorded on some *Caribbean*¹³ islands, according to U. S. Forest Service scientist Joe Wunderle, may be that they found refuge in traditional coffee farms. Wunderle, who studies survival rates of migrant birds, says that such farms are nearly as good as real forest for some *species*.

That view is echoed¹⁴ by Russell Greenberg and his colleagues at the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center (SMBC). In Chiapas,¹⁵ Mexico, SMBC biologists found that shaded coffee areas have considerably more birds (at least 150 species) than other agricultural systems and compare favorably with natural forest. The SMBC *birders* found 94 to 97 percent fewer bird species in sun coffee than in shaded farms.

The importance of coffee as bird habitat is *magnified* by two crucial conditions. First, coffee is widespread, the most important crop for many areas. It occupies the intermediate *altitudes* between 1,500 and 4,500 feet, *dominating* the entire *ecosystem*. There are an estimated seven million acres of coffee in the northern Neotropics¹⁶, where most of the migratory birds winter — an area the size of Maryland¹⁷. In addition, coffee is strategically valuable, often surrounding parks, forming biological corridors between green areas or standing alone, a forested island in a *denuded* landscape.

John Terborgh, the director of the Duke Center for Tropical Conservation, says the shaded tree farms throw the birds a lifeline. "Virtually throughout the tropics, the belt between 1,500 and 6,000 feet is under siege,¹⁸" he says. "Migrant birds that cannot adapt to artificial conditions, such as dairy farms and coffee plantations, should already be considered endangered."

At least half of the coffee in the region has already been *converted* to more profitable full sun and is now of no more value to birds and other wildlife than a barren cattle pasture. Even though the market is *glutted* with low-quality "industrial bulk"¹⁹ coffee from the vast, full-sun fields, many farmers with shaded farms are under tremendous economic pressure to either convert to full sun or sell out to developers. In the late 80s, when coffee prices were down, many producers *razed* their shaded farms and replaced them with sugar cane,²⁰ cattle or plastic *hothouses* for ornamental plants.

Observing this alarming pattern, Guatemalan FIIT biologists

started the ECO-O.K. Coffee Certification Program with the Rainforest Alliance. Farms that meet ECO-O.K.'s strict set of agricultural standards get a seal of approval that can be used to promote the product in the marketplace.

ECO-O.K. coffee is slowly gaining visibility in the U.S. David Griswold's San Francisco - based Sustainable Harvest coffee company imports only shade - grown specialty beans. Griswold, who can boast of convincing Ben & Jerry's to sell Aztec Harvest ice cream (made from organic Mexican beans), says that promoting shade - grown coffee "is going to be the next big thing environmentally. One of every two Americans drinks coffee, so that's 125 million people who can easily do something positive for the environment." Griswold is working with Mendocino, California - based Thanksgiving Coffee and the American Birding Association to create a new line of Songbird Coffees, in *cartons* decorated with pictures of warblers and orioles. Two large chains, Wild Oats Foods and Wild Birds International, have already signed on to sell the product.

Appeals to some larger coffee companies have been unsuccessful, because the marketing mavens look blank²¹ when the biologists talk about habitat, and they're unconvinced about the purchasing power of bird watchers and conservationists. It's plain they don't know beans about birds.²²

Notes:

1. clouds in the coffee: 咖啡背后的问题。

2. shade-grown harvest: 指 shade farm (有绿荫遮护的庄场)的收获。
3. pesticide-intensive: 大量使用杀虫剂的。
4. full-sun farms: 指完全裸露在阳光下的农场。
5. eco-friendly shade farms: 周围生态环境良好的农场。
6. Guatemalan: 危地马拉的。
7. biodiversity: 指一地区或全世界基因物种和生态环境的总和。
8. migratory songbirds, raptors, bats, reptiles and other fauna: 迁移的鸣鸟、猛禽、蝙蝠、爬行动物和其他动物群。
9. Alaska: 阿拉斯加(美国一州)。
10. mosaic: 镶嵌图案;马赛克。
11. warblers, orioles, tanagers, flycatchers, thrushes, vireos and their forest-dependent cohorts: 鸣鸟、金莺、唐纳雀、食虫鸟、画眉、捕虫鸣鸟和其他依赖森林的同类。
12. holding on: 有些鸟类似乎在挣扎中生存。
13. Caribbean: 加勒比海。
14. That view is echoed: 这一看法引起了…的共鸣。
15. Chiapas: 恰帕斯[墨西哥南部一州]。
16. Neotropics: 新热带区[大陆动物地理区之一]。
17. Maryland: 美国的马里兰州。
18. under siege: 受到围攻。
19. industrial bulk: 工业化大批量生产的。
20. sugar cane: 甘蔗。
21. mavens look blank: 行家们一脸茫然。
22. It's plain they don't know beans about birds: 很显然,他们对鸟类一无所知。beans 在类似的句型中指少量。又如: I haven't heard beans about the matter. 关于这件事我一点儿也没有听说过。

Comprehension Questions:

1. What are the differences between shade farms and full – sun farms?
2. Which benefits birds? Traditional coffee plantations or modern industrial ones? Why?
3. Why is coffee important as bird habitat?
4. What is Eco – Coffee Certificate Program?
5. What problems are farmers with shaded farms facing?
6. What do you think the future of those birds will be like?

2. Empowering Species

还自然以生存权力

The best way to save endangered species may
be to help them pay their own way.¹

endangered species opponents proponents
debate sacrifice private-property
landowners foremost cost-benefit
inheritance outlaw bounty easement

Many of the battles to come, as a Democratic Administration faces a Republican Congress, will be the sort of meanspirited partisan scuffles² that Americans love to *deride*. But sometimes the smoke and dust of the *fray* will conceal a matter of principle, even philosophy — as in the case of the reauthorization of the Endangered Species Act.

Like many laws, the act must periodically be reauthorized, which is to say that the federal government must occasionally renew its own authority to fund the act's enforcement and administration. Reauthorization was scheduled for 1992, but Congress postponed action indefinitely — its members did not want to touch the issue in an

election year. In the meantime, frustration with the law has been building. The inevitable debate will probably take place this year, perhaps within the next few months. It will be bloody, as they say inside the Beltway. At issue will be the nation's biological *heritage*, more or less, and a vision of its economic future. Conflict will be engaged by the usual operatives: lobbyists³ representing some of the nation's most powerful interest groups.

Opponents call for narrowing the *scope* of the law, claiming that society is spending billions to protect the Penland beardtongue⁴, the fat pocketbook mussel⁵, the giant kangaroo rat⁶, and a *cavalcade* of other creatures with absurd-sounding names. The Endangered Species Act, in their view, threatens to *usurp* so much private property and *capsize* so many jobs that it may wreck our very economy. Proponents declare the law inadequately enforced and demand that its protections be extended to more species at a faster rate; otherwise, they claim, we risk trashing⁷ our biological life support system. Weaken or *fortify*? — that is the tenor of the debate. One question is rarely addressed: Can the law be more responsive to the concerns of both sides?

* * *

The Endangered Species Act orders the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a branch of the Department of the Interior⁸, to protect species recognized as endangered, without regard to cost. The goal is to *banish* extinction from the United States. Unfortunately, the present system has failed utterly to do this. Species are going extinct anyway, and the threats are multiplying. For every species that Fish

and Wildlife has successfully removed from the endangered list in the past two decades, it has added more than one hundred others.

This outcome would have surprised the members of Congress who passed the law, in 1973. *Implicit* in the debate over the act was the assumption, still held by many *conservationists* today, that endangered species could be saved without sacrifice; if development affects a species here, we can just move the development or the species someplace else. Since then it has become clear that the reasons species become endangered are not always *trivial*, and that saving them is not so simple.

Anyone who has walked in the western parts of Albany, New York, can see the problem. A hundred years ago the area hosted one of the world's largest populations of the Karner Blue butterfly, a lovely little *bug* that appeared on the endangered list at the end of 1992. The former *haunts* of the butterfly have been taken over by an interstate highway, a power *substation*, a campus of the State University of New York, and several hundred middle-class homes. In other words, the butterfly was endangered by the satisfaction of ordinary human desires to drive around, switch on lamps at night, learn about interesting things, and live in a nice home.

Because human interests cannot be ignored, not all species can be saved. Yet the current system demands the *unattainable*: all species must be saved, and human interests must be ignored. *Amplifying* this *dissonance* has been an unwillingness in Congress to award the Fish and Wildlife Service more than a *paltry* budget to enforce and *administer* the law. As a result, the agency has been

driven to *impose* conservation tasks on those private – property owners who are unlucky enough to have land that *sustains* endangered species. To be safe from possible *prosecution*, they must *verify* that using their property will cause the creatures no harm. Endangered species thus become a *liability* that encourages otherwise responsible citizens to call in the *bulldozers* at the first glimpse of an endangered bird or lizard⁹.

Both sides of the debate recognize these *flaws*, but they disagree on how to remedy them. Supporters of the law cling to¹⁰ its impossible goal, calling for increased budgets and stricter enforcement. This would turn Fish and Wildlife Service biologists into ecological *mandarins*, making choices for entire regions which must favor the interests of other species and not people. Such *overbearing* regulation would increase the *incentives* for landowners to destroy *pristine* land, with predictably disastrous environmental consequences.

Not that opponents have a better answer. Many call for compensating landowners for any decrease in the value of their property brought on by species protection. But this amounts to little more than replacing ecological mandarins with economic mandarins, whose decisions would be equally predictable and equally disastrous.

* * *

What will it take to do a better job of saving our natural heritage? The foremost change must be to recognize that our values are *manifold*. If we valued only trees and streams, we wouldn't hesi-

tate to save them, no matter what the cost. If we wanted only cement and steel, any part of nature beyond the minimum necessary to sustain life would become *expendable*. If the past is any guide, the debaters in Washington will blindly favor one side or the other. Progress will be possible only if the unrealistic demands of the Endangered Species Act are scaled back and supplemented with a way of satisfying some of the needs of affected landowners.

The demands of the current law should not be *eliminated* entirely, though. Even if a species fails a strict cost-benefit¹¹ test, few people would support its extinction without pausing to reflect. Protecting species is a task that deserves a place in the political life of our country, alongside other basic values such as protecting health, maintaining the nation's defense, and *fostering* education.

In other words, a balance must be struck. Part of that balance should be for landowners to *concede* that our ecological inheritance is important enough to justify some regulation of their land. Another, equally important part of the balance should be for conservationists to *concede* that development plans that threaten species are reflections of the human desire to have stores, roads, schools, homes, and the like. The two *concessions* point in the same direction: neither species nor developers should win all the time. The question is when and where each should prevail.

Moneyed interests, of course, will always threaten species and other environmental *assets* that cannot pay their way. The most appropriate *counterweight* is not to *outlaw* human nature but to

award some money to environmental protection. Merely throwing money at the current system, however, will only *exacerbate* the problems *inherent* in the Endangered Species Act.

One solution would be to create an Endangered Species Trust Fund, to promote conservation in ways more *compatible* with American values and culture. The fund could underwrite¹² a variety of programs, from ecological research to educational advertising to conservation assistance to *outright* land purchase. It could encourage landowners to share their land with species in trouble. The state of Wisconsin, for example, already has such a program, which covers seven species on the federal endangered list. Landowners agree to a nonbinding¹³ protection plan, and are rewarded with a picture of the species, a certificate of appreciation, ongoing species management help, and, most important, the belief that they are voluntarily doing the right thing. According to the state, most landowners happily go along, although the program is unlikely to *deter* big development plans.

Not all species can be protected by voluntary programs, of course, and where necessary the trust fund could help *subsidize* conservation efforts by landowners. One possible model is a program sponsored by the Defenders of Wildlife, a Washington-based conservation group, which offers a \$ 5,000 "*bounty*" to each landowner who has an established wolf *den* on his or her property. The trust could also promote commercial practices that are environmentally friendlier but costlier than current practices. As the Soil Conservation Service does for farmers and soil conservation, a Biological Con-

servation Service, funded by the trust, could encourage foresters, ranchers, and miners to *modify* their activities, thus reducing — though not eliminating — harm to endangered species.

In critical cases the trust fund would have the tools to restrict land use greatly, *albeit* in a noncoercive¹⁴ manner. It could take a lesson from The Nature Conservancy, which protects some biologically valuable land by paying for a conservation easement¹⁵ — a legal contract that forbids developing a piece of property but allows the landowner to earn income through ecologically *benign activities*, such as certain types of agriculture. As a final *resort*, in places where almost any human activity threatens the other inhabitants, the trust fund could buy land and protect it as a biological preserve.

Such an effort would be expensive, but it could go a long way toward removing our natural heritage from the mire of partisan bickering.¹⁶ Indeed, the idea of a trust fund has quietly attracted interest from environmental organizations and from *advocates* of property rights. Combined with a scaled-back Endangered Species Act, the fund could help the nation provide environmental protection with less social conflict. Isn't that what it means to make the law responsive to the people and the causes it serves?

Notes:

1. The best way to save endangered species may be to help them pay their own way: 挽救濒危种类的最佳办法是帮助它们自食其力。
2. meanspirited partisan scuffles: 卑鄙的党派间的混战。