Why protect Biodiversity is an interesting question that sadly not enough people ask.
This is partly why I am asking it.

Be it resolved that humanity as a whole continues to attempt to preserve species, both animal and plant, from extinction.

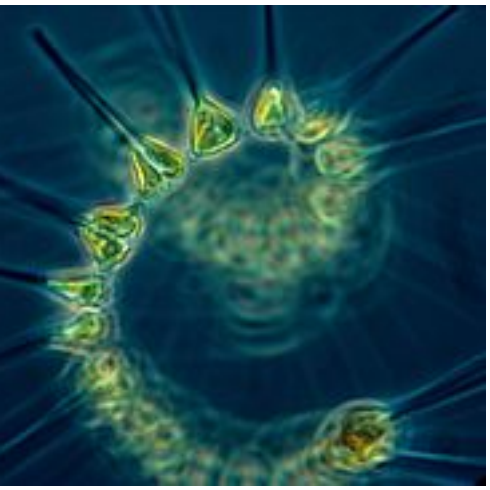
For the affirmative side:
Many websites state that biodiversity is important to ensuring a durable ecosystem that can better survive threats and catastrophe (http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/intro/index_en.htm, https://ypte.org.uk/factsheets/biodiversity/why-do-we-need-to-conserve-biodiversity,), whereas others make moral arguments (https://www.apsnet.org/publications/apsnetfeatures/Pages/ICPP98Biodiversity.aspx, https://ypte.org.uk/factsheets/biodiversity/why-do-we-need-to-conserve-biodiversity, https://e360.yale.edu/features/in-defense-of-biodiversity-why-protecting-species-from-extinction-matters), while even more say that if these animals were to go extinct then the entire ecosystem might collapse (https://www.apsnet.org/publications/apsnetfeatures/Pages/ICPP98Biodiversity.aspxm, again, and https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21513732.2015.1050969). Some even make the argument that the aesthetic beauty of nature should not be destroyed (https://www.apsnet.org/publications/apsnetfeatures/Pages/ICPP98Biodiversity.aspx, once more) According to ec.europa.eu, over 42% of European mammals are endangered, combined with 15% of birds and 45% of butterflies. If we let these animals go extinct, they argue, not only will the environment be damaged beyond repair, but future generations won't be able to appreciate their beauty. Some also see the value in predators, as they regulate the presence of herbivores that would otherwise devastate plant life. Furthermore, ecosystems are so complex that abandoning certain species to their fate may well impact the rest of the ecosystem in cataclysmic ways.

<— Beautiful butterfly.

Then the negative side could make the following arguments.

Extinction is a natural process. It makes no sense for us to intervene. Species that cannot protect themselves should not be protected by us. All to often the statements "Protecting biodiversity" and "saving all animal life" are conflated. The resolution states and science agrees: not all animals need our help to stay alive, and those that are in danger of being extinct certainly do not provide crucial services to our environment or our species. Einstein is often misquoted as having said that "If bees disappeared off the face of the earth, man would only have four years left to live," whereas nothing could be further from the truth. The ten most important crops to human life need no insect pollination, and in fact, the bee itself is an invasive species in the Americas.
Not counting the obvious fallacy in moral arguments (no one appointed us protectors of nature after all), the other points such as "the entire ecosystem might collapse" and "These endangered species provide important services to our planet" are entirely speculatory and easy

to disprove. For the latter it can be said that if these species provide important services to our world, then the fact that they are near extinction and our world is still livable is indicative of their lack of importance: if they provided a crucial service then the environment would show signs of collapse. However, species that fill an important niche (earthworms, phytoplankton, etc) are doing just fine, and would continue to do just fine without our help. Species that are important to maintaining a number of other prolific, environmentally important plants (such as bees) should definitely be conserved, though not for the sake of biodiversity.
In reality, a large number of species are unimportant to the ecosystem as a whole, and as they near extinction the fact that the ecosystems of the world don't disintegrate is a sign that that argument fails. Species went extinct all the time in the past and every single time a new form of rabbit or insect died the ecosystem didn't collapse because no animal relies on a single species for food, and even if they do their death wouldn't mean much to the climate that sustains us either. In effect, the lives of plants matter more than the lives of animals because plants regulate our climate whereas animals do not. In fact, aggressive herbivores might damage plant life and thus the environment. Why should we conserve those things that would damage the climate as we do? Should they not be left to die, or even exterminated?
Many arguments around protecting biodiversity rely upon either morals or fears the ecosystem may collapse or upon the far more scientifically robust point that many species provide a more durable ecosystem. As for this point, one can cite the Irish potato famine as a result of the overpopulation of a single species, and while this is a good example one must recognize that even with only a few species being devoted to each niche, there would still be a large number of species remaining, enough to keep the ecosystem durable. Not only that, but even the most destructive plagues (see the black death, where the word plague gets its name) often fail to wipe out a species if it is sufficiently large.
The affirmative side makes the argument that we should conserve nature for future generations to enjoy. I would like to point out that very few people go exploring nature today, that that number is shrinking, and also that not all common species are ugly. In fact, some of the most common species are beautiful creatures - therefore that point fails.



Pictured: Phytoplankton.

The moral arguments fail based on the fact that their very existence is a fallacy and has no logical basis. The argument that the entire ecosystem would collapse, ironically, can be disproven with a quote from a conservationist:

"We need ants to survive, but they don't need us at all" - Prof. E. O Wilson.

While this quote is most definitely false, it raises the point that the most crucial, basic animals of the ecosystem do not need the rarer, often endangered species to live. Earthworms do not care if a species of rhino goes extinct, and if all the elephants die phytoplankton won't shed a tear (especially because they don't have tear ducts).

Not only that, but the cost of protecting every species in the world from extinction would go well into the billions, and would be entirely economically and politically unfeasible.

If the affirmative side were to try and rebut those points I imagine it would go something like this:

If we let the predators die, then the herbivores will start overpopulating, wiping out the plant life that they feed on. Furthermore, there are plenty of beautiful, nearly extinct creatures, and the other 15% of our oxygen production is important.

The Negative side would most likely respond in kind, saying things like:
“Naturally there are plenty of predators that don’t need our protection, and by simply ignoring them and not contributing at all to protecting biodiversity as the resolution suggests they would still balance out the number of herbivores sufficiently. Furthermore, the point about how fewer people go out exploring nature today than ever before still stands and thus claiming that the beauty of those creatures matters is entirely irrelevant. Furthermore, if we don’t protect biodiversity by uprooting and destroying invasive species we may very well see an increase in oxygen production, let alone a reduction.

And then the back and forth would inevitably go on four hours. This is why debates have a time limit.

VERDICT: The Negative side has a lot of points, and even if we bring up the affirmative’s “eco-tourism” point, it may very well fail because rare species that are near extinction would have to be so rare they wouldn’t serve as a sufficient draw for tourists. There is no way that argument works, either the animals are plentiful enough that they serve as an ecotourism magnet or they are rate enough that they don’t and thus contribute nothing to eco-tourism. I do favor the negative side as they appear to make scientific points that are hard to rebut, and I have yet to see a point made by the affirmative side that the negative side cannot rebut. Therefore, I am forced to hand this argument to the negative side for the time being.

That was a lot of text. I promise you this: the next questions will have shorter answers.