

Discussion Questions Jared Diamond. "Easter Island's End." *Discover* magazine, August 1995. 16(8): 62-69.

1. The article describes the former abundance of trees and forests on Easter Island. Describe several factors that contributed to the extinction of trees on the island.
2. Imagine that you arrived on the island before the tree populations were extinct, but after the tree populations had started to decline. Suggest a management plan that could have helped the Easter Islanders save the tree populations from extinction.
3. What have scientists concluded about the levels of plant and animal biodiversity on Easter Island in the past? Describe how scientific evidence supports these conclusions.
4. How do current levels of plant and animal biodiversity on Easter Island compare with past biodiversity levels?
5. Can today's levels of biodiversity on Easter Island be explained in terms of complexity and disturbance? Explain your answer.
6. Diamond likens the demise of the civilization on Easter Island with the overpopulation and resource destruction on the entire planet. Do you feel that this comparison is justified? Why or why not?
7. What are the parallels? What are the differences?
8. If we choose to heed Diamond's warning, what can we do to prevent a population crash of the entire human population?
9. What assumptions does the author make when presenting the information? Is there other historical data that should be considered before making such claims?
10. Write one thoughtful question that you have about the article. Good questions will try to deepen your understanding of concepts, or will try to relate the content of the article to other ideas.

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