

David Rodríguez-Rodríguez

# The Great Family of Life

Rethinking the place of *Homo sapiens* in  
the Biosphere

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# Preface

When I was a child, my grandfather used to tell me about the awesome experiences with nature he had had in central Spain when he was my age. He told me about Iberian lynxes being frequently watched hunting rabbits in the fields close to the place where he lived. He told me about hundreds of larks playing their cheerful warble in the crops. He told me about crystal clean streams full with European eels and crayfish. He told me about the deafening croak of frogs at sunset. Sadly for me, I could never witness such amazing wildlife shows. All those wonders of nature are long gone. The fields, the crops and the streams are now eerily empty and silent.

This book results from a blunt personal realisation acquired for more than 15 years of passionate scientific work to conserve biodiversity: despite ostentatious political statements, numerous international resolutions, striking activist actions, and the hard work of many rangers, activists, researchers and practitioners, the status of biodiversity, at least that of the large part of it that are not humans or its dozens of cultivated species, keeps deteriorating.

As someone who is both witnessing and verifying the accelerated, reckless destruction of the natural world, I cannot attend such tragedy passively. We must all react to this vital challenge within our remit and capacities: by reproducing sensibly, by reducing our senseless consumption, by respecting all forms of life, by supporting pro-environmental actions, or by raising awareness on this crucial issue. That is what I intended to do with this book: to do my bit to try to stop the collapse of life on Earth.

I hope that you will enjoy its reading and learn something from it but, above that, I truly hope that it will inspire and move you into determined action for our travel companions on this spinning wonder that is our common home.

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*Live simply so that others can simply live*  
*Attributed to Mahatma Gandhi*

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