

## A Perspective

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In the BBC programme about Extinction on September 14, 2020, Sir David Attenborough explained how extinction of species occurs naturally with time, but the speed at which it now appeared to be occurring was alarming. In addition, global warming is perceived to be increasing too fast with very hard-to-manage fires currently in America and last year in Australia. Ice seems to be melting at the Poles, sea levels appear to be rising causing flooding in more temperate regions, such as the UK. Some of this is man-made. Fishing methods catch enormous numbers of fish in a single batch instead of a more moderate number left in the Ocean for other fish to feed on. Rain forests are being chopped down to make way for different planting and agricultural methods. Animal numbers like those of gorillas are reducing.

How does all this affect the COVID-19 global pandemic? This novel coronavirus was caused by the acute respiratory system virus Sars-Cov-2. Sars-Cov-1, and Sars-Cov-2 are proposed to have arisen in China. The earlier Sars-Cov-1 occurred in 2003 and was on a smaller scale. However, various lessons were learned for use with COVID-19: isolation (lockdown); disposal of tissues used to catch sneezes, coughs and colds; wearing of face masks; tracking and tracing; social distancing; frequent hand-washing and in hospitals and other places of care, the wearing of personal protective equipment and use of oxygen and ventilators. Now many of these practices have been adapted in many other countries affected by the virus and some of the general public are not used to responding in this way.

The virus is thought to have arisen in an animal host such as a pangolin or a bat and spread to humans but it is also thought to have spread to other animals. Once the

other animals are affected, the planet and its species are in a more vulnerable state. It could mean that second spikes, as we are now experiencing in local towns, are a reality. Further spikes or waves may occur or a new virus could arise.

The virus has brought some nations and their economies to a temporary standstill.

Let us be hopeful that our global scientists will find a way through all this turmoil.

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