

Effect of large mammal extinction: Humans become preferred vectors

Save the Rhinos! Save the Elephants! Save the humans?! It seems strange to be connecting our own fate to that of wildlife but new research suggests that protecting these large animals may also be, in effect, protecting our own health.

As populations of large wildlife decline around the world, scientists are concerned about the potential effects this will have not only on the smaller animals they leave behind, but also the diseases they carry. Dr. Hillary Young, former Smithsonian Post-doctoral Fellow and now Assistant Professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and Dr. Kris Helgen, Curator of Mammals from the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History, have provided new experimental evidence showing that the risk of rodent-borne disease doubles in landscapes that have lost these large animals.

Read the full, original story: [Losing large mammals increases human risk from rodent-borne diseases](#)