Xuan Ha Nghiem

Listening to Professor John Hess’ experiences on the Galapagos Islands, it was hard to imagine a world where animals and human beings can coexist peacefully together without fright. He told a story about coming close to the Frigate bird or coming face to face with the animals there without scaring them away. This is a whole different world than what we have here in the city or town.

In a city like Worcester, cars are running around all day and night, crushing small skunks that are in the path, trees are constantly cleared to make room for new land, and buildings are being demolished for construction projects. Such destruction is beneficial to us as we can get around quicker, the trees build our homes and windows, and new construction projects help to create new jobs to keep the economy running. But, looking at it from one of the animal’s perspective our way of living is disrupting their peace. For centuries, we have destroyed many of their habitats, leaving a lot of them having to fend for their survival. We have also as a consequence imposed our “civilized” life on them, which forced them to have to adapt to our way of life in order to coexist in a world with us. This overtime can led to a fear of humans and the technology that we have created.

On the other side of the world on the Galapagos Island, the animals seem to live in a freer environment, limited by human contact and away from the modern technology that can destroy their habitats. Many of them as a result are left alone to only have to worry about the predators in the natural world, which is maybe why the animals there are said to be less fearful of humans.

The stories we are consistently told about the Galapagos Island animals are how humans can come within a few inches of them without having to chase after them to reach that length. This does not simply show a contrast from what we see here in the city verses the Galapagos Island, but it also reveals our place and influence on the natural world.

In the places where we have made our home, we can see the affects this has had on the animals that had come in contact with us. Reducing forests to make way for new settlements, building up gigantic buildings, and creating new models of cars to drive every year, these actions have all scared the animals away. They have grown to fear humans, which is very different from what one would see at the Galapagos Island.

Oftentimes, it is our modern society and way of living that comes in conflict with the natural world. One of our biggest problems is the pollution where the toxic chemicals and wastes coming from the products we manufacture or produce are emitted to the environment. This not only pollutes the air we breathe but it also has damaging effects on the animals. For example, the oil spills that covers the birds or the plastic wastes that the animals can choke on are all consequences of what we have done to our environment.

On the Galapagos Island however, there is limited human activities that can disrupt the natural world there. This contrast teaches us to be more careful with our actions in the natural world, since sometimes we seem to be the ones responsible for some of the deterioration in it.