



# FRESHWATER

SUPPORTING LIFE ON OUR PLANET BY ENSURING  
HEALTHY, RESILIENT FRESHWATER SYSTEMS



# OVERVIEW

## Water is essential to all life.

Plants, humans, and wildlife alike rely on clean, abundant sources of freshwater to drink; freshwater ecosystems provide habitats and fisheries; and flowing waters nourish agricultural fields, downstream deltas, and floodplains. An estimated two billion people rely on rivers for their drinking water and at least 12 million tons of freshwater fish are caught annually, providing food and livelihoods for hundreds of millions of people.

Despite its essential role to life and livelihoods, freshwater is a finite resource. Less than 1% of the Earth's surface is covered by freshwater. At the same time, these environments host an abundance of life, over half of all fish and at least 10% of all known species. However, this life is in trouble: one in three freshwater species face extinction and 87% of wetland habitats have disappeared since 1700. Freshwater systems and the life they support are threatened by unsustainable agriculture, poorly planned infrastructure, climate change, pollution, and overextraction of surface and groundwater supplies.



**GLOBAL FRESHWATER DEMAND IS EXPECTED TO EXCEED SUPPLY BY 40% BY 2030**



**AGRICULTURE USES 70% OF FRESHWATER GLOBALLY**



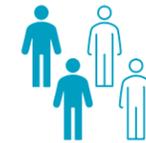
**63% OF THE WORLD'S LONGEST RIVERS ARE OBSTRUCTED DUE TO DAMS OR OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE**



**AROUND TWO-THIRDS OF THE WORLD'S TRANSBOUNDARY RIVERS DO NOT HAVE A COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**



**84% DECLINE IN FRESHWATER SPECIES POPULATIONS SINCE 1970**



**ALMOST HALF THE WORLD'S POPULATION WILL BE LIVING IN AREAS OF HIGH WATER STRESS BY 2030**



**9 OUT OF 10 BUSINESS RISKS ARE WATER & CLIMATE RELATED**

# OUR STRATEGY



## CONSERVATION OF CRITICAL LANDSCAPES

We conserve and protect biodiverse landscapes that are under threat.



## REGENERATIVE AND RESILIENT SYSTEMS

We transform the way food, commodities, goods, and energy are produced to meet the needs of people without degrading nature.



## THRIVING PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

We support people and communities to develop their own conservation priorities, ensuring that protecting nature also protects their livelihoods.



## INNOVATION AND INFLUENCE

We combine innovation, scientific knowledge, policy analysis, finance, and technical expertise to have impact at scale.

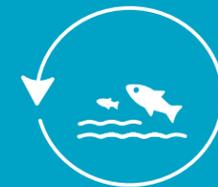
# OUR APPROACH

**Preserving freshwater resources and ecosystems is essential to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals while living within planetary boundaries.**

WWF envisions a world where the human right to water is upheld and supported by healthy, resilient freshwater ecosystems that sustain human and wildlife populations across landscapes and basins. To achieve this, WWF is addressing these threats to freshwater by:

- Promoting good governance of shared freshwater resources, including building communities' and natural systems' resilience and ability to adapt.
- Advocating for and implementing sustainable energy, regenerative agriculture, and water stewardship that keeps rivers and their basins healthy, resilient, and free-flowing in a changing climate.
- Influencing financial flows towards innovative and nature-based solutions.
- Convening private and public sector actors to connect science-based actions and strategy to basin conservation objectives that secure equitable access to freshwater for all life.
- Promoting and supporting policies and on-the-ground actions to protect and restore rivers and other wetlands.

# OUR INITIATIVES



## CONNECTED RIVERS OF RESILIENCE

Keeping the world's most biodiverse rivers connected and healthy by strengthening protections, promoting more sustainable development and energy planning, and restoring rivers.



## CORPORATE WATER STEWARDSHIP

Transforming businesses' relationship with water and empowering the private sector's influence to achieve responsible freshwater management at scale, thus fostering collective action for healthy watersheds.



## TRANSBOUNDARY GOVERNANCE & SUSTAINABLE FINANCE

Strengthening governance of freshwater ecosystems through integrated basin management to promote transboundary connectivity and sustainable development.

# WHERE WE WORK

The WWF network has water expertise in over **30 basins**, and the US office focuses on supporting those shown here.



## 2030 GOALS

- ❑ Protect and restore rivers and their critical services for humans and nature.
- ❑ Reduce freshwater habitat loss and degradation through improved water stewardship performance that aligns textile, food, and beverage supply chain action with basin conservation goals.
- ❑ Support shared visions, with diverse and inclusive stakeholder support, for sustainable development in the KAZA, Pantanal, and Rio Grande-Bravo River basins with decision making, financing, and implementation plans to maintain flows that support downstream ecosystems and livelihoods.
- ❑ Contribute to equity and empowerment of communities, particularly as related to management and governance of freshwater resources.



WWF is working at every level—from local communities to multinational corporations—to protect and restore freshwater systems.

Together, we can conserve water resources for nature, communities, and businesses now and in the future.

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[worldwildlife.org](http://worldwildlife.org)

World Wildlife Fund  
1250 24th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20037

For further information, please contact:

**Michele Thieme**

Freshwater Deputy Director, Freshwater and Food  
[michele.thieme@wwfus.org](mailto:michele.thieme@wwfus.org)

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WWF, Avenue du Mont-Bland, 1196 Gland, Switzerland.  
Tel. +41 22 364 9111. Fax. +41 22 364 0332.