

# An Eco-Awakening

*Nature isn't a nice-to-have; it's an absolute essential.*

As our world continues to change around us—as forests burn and wildlife habitat vanishes, as oceans rise and freshwater habitats recede—it becomes all too clear how much of our future and, ultimately, our way of life are intertwined with a healthy planet.

The good news is that people all over the world are increasingly aware of what's at stake and are advocating to fix our broken natural systems. A May 2021 report commissioned by WWF and the Economist Intelligence Unit found that concern for nature has grown globally by 16 percent in the past five years—and grown even more dramatically in emerging markets.

Consumers today are four times more likely to purchase goods and services from a company when they think the brand has a strong purpose. As calls for more sustainable products and for bolder action by governments continue to mount, the volume of global news media coverage of climate change and other conservation challenges is on the rise as well, jumping by 103 percent between 2018 and 2019.

This swelling tide of concern and activism is informing everything from global campaigns to local protests, but it is also giving WWF and our allies the leverage we need to effect change in the public and private sectors. With the help of generous donors like you, we can continue pressing key decision makers to better incorporate nature into their decisions.

## The Time Is Now

Global conservation has reached an inflection point. The rise in people demanding action for nature is a strong undercurrent pushing governments and corporations to make dramatic changes.

For example, in January, President Emmanuel Macron of France convened the One Planet Summit, where 50 nations took the “30x30” pledge, committing themselves to protecting 30 percent of their



WWF takes a variety of steps to ensure our finite planet is able to house, feed, and clothe an increasing population while preserving our natural environment. © James Morgan/WWF-International



WWF's Terai Arc Landscape Program brought the concept of mentha farming to many farmers in Nepal. The crop has a good market value and is unpalatable for wildlife, and helps reduce human-wildlife conflict. © Simon de Trey-White/WWF-UK



Aerial photo of Orinoco River and tepui of Colombia.  
© Day's Edge Productions



Singye Wangmo, Senior Forestry Officer at Royal Manas National Park, leads a team of 30 rangers in monitoring tigers through camera traps in Bhutan's Royal Manas National Park. © Simon Rawles/WWF-UK

lands and seas by the year 2030. Many countries also changed their policies on overseas investment funds to support climate solutions and nature conservation. More recently, President Joe Biden convened a landmark climate summit, which, in addition to setting mitigation targets for the U.S., signals a major change in U.S. leadership in the climate sphere and brings our country back to the table with other nations dedicated to finding solutions. Later this year, we will see major international meetings addressing nature and climate change.

This spirit of action is being felt in the private sector, too. Recently, some 95-plus percent of the shareholders of a major U.S. agribusiness company voted to take deforestation out of the supply chain—a first for this sector. And through our *ReSource: Plastic* initiative, WWF is finding plenty of other major corporations willing to step forward and help us eliminate plastic waste in nature by 2030.

The conjunction of citizen demand and governmental and corporate action has given WWF and our allies an exceptional opportunity to drastically accelerate our work on unprecedented scales. And, as ever, the support of committed natural stewards like you is essential to realizing that promise.

## How WWF Is Seizing The Moment

The old expression “it takes a village” is particularly apt when it comes to conservation. As extensive and well-equipped as the WWF network is, the challenges we face as a planet are too large and complex for any single organization to tackle. That’s why we partner with local communities, Indigenous peoples, NGOs, businesses, governments, academia, and stakeholders from all walks of life as we pursue our mission.

WWF has always cared deeply about conserving places around the world that are most critical to the survival of threatened species, and that support the healthy and resilient ecosystems which sustain abundant biodiversity. These are the places we must protect to ensure that both nature and people thrive. We also view conservation challenges through a systems lens, studying the interface of the environment with the economy, society, governance, and individual crises, so that we are better able to tailor solutions that meet the needs of each area of interest. This world-view approach also considers global threats like climate change, food production, and infrastructure development that require solutions larger than any one organization alone can solve.

To seize this critical moment in our planet’s history, and to achieve the most complete planet-positive outcomes for nature and people, we are centering our work on these two integrated strategies:

## Place-Based Conservation

In our efforts to secure some of Earth's most extraordinary places, local people must be at the heart of every solution. We must ensure that local communities and nature are co-equal beneficiaries of our work and that communities have the support they need to lead on delivering their own sustainable vision.

No matter where we're working, WWF takes the long view, exploring sustainable financing and management plans that can endure the test of time. We understand that climate change, economic development, infrastructure placement, and demographic shifts will transform the places we care about, so we design our conservation initiatives to deal with the changes we'll face 20 to 30 years from now.

We remain committed to science-based approaches. We leverage the latest research, test innovative solutions to protect people and nature, and contribute to new scholarship. Ultimately, we embrace something we like to call "soothsayer conservation." It means we're constantly looking for the signs, grounded in our science-based approach, that will allow us to anticipate what's coming and ensure our efforts protect people and wildlife for generations to come.

Our Earth for Life initiative is a signature approach in how WWF helps safeguard places. We partner with government leaders, public- and private-sector donors, and grass-roots conservation groups to secure the necessary short-term resources and long-term funding models for creating and expanding conservation areas. These efforts are managed by a collaborative board that ensures the conservation areas are properly managed, endure the tests of time, and benefit local communities. This approach has proven so successful in Brazil and Bhutan that we're supporting similar programs in Peru and Colombia. We have a bold vision for the next 10 years of co-creating 20 such programs in countries around the world.

## Whole-Planet Solutions

At WWF, we know that we simply can't protect Earth's special places if we don't also take on the challenges that affect our planet as a whole. Foremost among them is climate change, which is forcing us to rethink the way we produce and consume energy, food, and water; protect the world's forests; and help people prepare for a changing world.

With the formal re-entry of the U.S. into the Paris Agreement, WWF and its partners have launched America Is All In, the most expansive coalition of U.S.-based leaders ever assembled in support of



Aerial of land cultivated for farming, near the Everglades.  
© WWF-US/Steve Morello



Restoring ocean health in a Papua New Guinea coastal community.  
© WWF-Papua New Guinea/Madang Fisheries



Elephants in the Luangwa River, which was saved from being dammed by WWF working with the government of Zambia.  
© Mint Images/Masterfile



Tigress with three cubs spotted by camera trap. © DoFPSBot/WWF

climate action. Having declared themselves “still in” when the Trump administration withdrew from the Paris Agreement, these leaders are now taking the next step and pledging to go “all in” on climate action.

WWF and its allies are also looking to help transform our food system, devising more sustainable approaches to farming and food production that will allow our planet to feed its projected 10 billion people by 2050 without destroying its natural capital. We’ll also be seeking new ways to dramatically reduce waste and change consumption and production patterns.

The amount of infrastructure on Earth is expected to double over the next 15 years, so WWF is working to help make it more ecologically sound and inclusive. In Zambia, to cite one example, WWF is helping chart a pathway to promote sustainable development and economic growth while keeping the Luangwa River free flowing.

Meanwhile, WWF will keep seeking ways to make businesses and financial centers positive forces for nature. One such initiative is a task force we’ve developed with colleagues in the United Nations and the larger financial sector to address nature-related financial disclosure. This will set standards for valuing the natural capital that we depend upon for our economy. And in doing so, it will help investors, banks, insurers, and companies understand the financial risks associated with the loss and degradation of nature and will integrate these nature-related risks into the calculus underpinning investment decisions, credit, and insurance underwriting.

## Going Forward

With citizens, conservationists, corporations, and governments uniting as never before, the time is ripe for major advances in the preservation of life on Earth. Whether that means pioneering new forms of place-based conservation or innovating new whole-planet solutions, WWF and our allies are uniquely positioned to make a difference. And generous Leadership Partners are more essential than ever.

**With your Leadership Partner support, WWF can make critical conservation advances at this extraordinary inflection point to create the world we all envision: a world in which both people and nature flourish.**