

PROTECTING WILDLIFE FOR A HEALTHY PLANET

Progress Report

With your support, WWF is making important progress for vulnerable species around the world, from Africa to the Arctic. Our innovative, science-driven programs equip and train rangers who stop poachers, galvanize e-commerce companies to shut down online sales of illegal wildlife products, and decrease consumer demand for poached goods. On the ground, we work with conservation partners, local communities, and governments to survey wildlife populations, promote landscape connectivity, manage human-wildlife conflict, and protect some of the world's most valuable ecosystems.

Together, we are creating a brighter future for wildlife and for ourselves, for generations to come. Thank you.





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TIGERS

More than a decade ago, tiger range countries committed to doubling the big cat's numbers by 2022, the next Year of the Tiger. As a result, tiger populations are now increasing in Nepal, India, Bhutan, and Russia.

In July 2022, Nepal announced that it had doubled—and nearly tripled—its wild tiger population. WWF was a part of the survey activities that revealed an increase in wild tiger numbers from an estimated 121 in 2010 to 355 in 2022—a testament to strategic, holistic conservation work that has included partnerships with communities, political will, wildlife corridor restoration, habitat protection and expansion, and wildlife crime prevention. Nepal's projects to tackle poaching protect other species, too. In fact, thanks to protected area patrols and community-based antipoaching units, Nepal has enjoyed zero rhino poaching since 2011.

In July 2022, the IUCN Red List estimated that global wild tiger numbers had reached a new high of around 4,500 tigers in the wild. However, a new global estimate is expected in late 2023, following the continued announcements from tiger range countries like Bhutan and India, as well as others, in sharing their latest national tiger numbers.



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ASIAN ELEPHANTS

Asian elephant populations are declining rapidly due to habitat loss and fragmentation from growing human-land use and development. These nomadic pachyderms often travel hundreds of miles to find food, water, and mates, navigating fragmented land that constitutes just 15% of their historical range. And as humans and elephants are more frequently competing for space and resources, they often collide—sometimes with deadly consequences. Together with partners, WWF is advancing a multi-pronged approach to secure remaining habitat and wildlife corridors, manage human-elephant conflict, and halt poaching in key geographies across 11 of 13 Asian elephant range countries.

In northeast India, for example, where human-elephant conflict is a growing challenge as habitat shrinks, WWF is partnering with the Assam Forest Department to study elephant land routes and behaviors during the dry harvest season, when they arrive from surrounding areas to feast on rice grains. A clear grasp of elephant movements and access to resources will highlight connectivity issues to inform wildlife corridor planning and help local communities manage human-elephant conflict.



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RHINOS

International poaching and trafficking jeopardize the survival of species such as rhinos, tigers, and elephants. With your help, we are turning the tide and making crucial progress toward our three key objectives: stop the poaching, stop the trafficking, and stop the buying.

Since 2016, an innovative partnership between WWF and Teledyne FLIR (FLIR), a producer of thermal cameras, has enabled rangers in parks and reserves in Kenya and Zambia to see poacher activity at night, identify areas of highest risk, and operate with greater effectiveness. In 2022, WWF launched the final stages of the Kifaru Rising program in Kenya, which aims to eliminate rhino poaching in 11 high-priority wildlife reserves.

At Kenya's Solio Game Reserve, WWF staff and partners from the Kenya Wildlife Service designed a thermal camera-based security system capable of detecting nighttime incursions around the park's perimeter. Home to more rhinos than perhaps anywhere else in Kenya, this private reserve played a key part in recovering the country's critically endangered black rhino population. Since installing similar security systems in Kenya's Lake Nakuru National Park and Ol Pejeta Conservancy, WWF has seen rhino poaching in these areas plummet to zero. Solio is the third site slated to receive this treatment, with system construction planned for this year.



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AFRICAN ELEPHANTS

Covering more square miles than any multi-nation terrestrial conservation area on the planet, the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area, or KAZA, connects a mosaic of protected and communal lands across Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

KAZA holds about 220,000 elephants, around 50% of Africa's total population, but their distribution across the landscape is uneven. To manage the population, reduce conflict, and realize KAZA countries' vision of a wildlife-driven economy, we must secure accurate data on the abundance and distribution of elephants across the full KAZA landscape.

In August 2022, following several years of planning, governments, NGO partners, and conservation experts launched the first-ever KAZA-wide aerial survey, laying crucial groundwork for the long-term protection of close to half of Africa's elephants. Through October 2022, survey teams used seven aircraft to survey the landscape and obtain population estimates and other crucial data. Survey data will unlock the next steps for elephant conservation in KAZA, setting the foundation to manage as one whole.



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POLAR BEARS

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is one of the most important protected areas in the Arctic. Among its valuable ecological features is the largest concentration of onshore denning habitat for polar bears in the US, and nesting habitat for birds flying in from every continent. WWF and our supporters are taking action to protect the Arctic Refuge permanently from the risks of oil and gas development.

Over the last year, WWF provided extensive scientific expertise on the draft and final environmental impact statements for the oil and gas leasing program initiated under the Trump administration, as well as comments on the grave risks seismic testing poses to the high concentration of south Beaufort Sea polar bears denning in the Refuge.



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BISON

WWF plays a central role in the powerful collaboration with Native nations to help bring bison back to the US Northern Great Plains. Prior to western colonization, between 30 and 60 million bison roamed the Great Plains and much of North America. Those populations were decimated over the course of decades, while the US government campaigned to achieve greater control over Native nations and their lands by deliberately exterminating their primary food source.

With support from WWF, Sičangu Co—formerly known as the Rosebud Economic Development Corporation, or REDCO—is returning cultural and ecological balance to the region. WWF's goal is to support the establishment of five healthy herds of more than 1,000 Plains bison each in the Northern Great Plains by 2025. We are happy to report that with calves born in spring 2022, the Wolakota Buffalo Range herd is well on its way to becoming North America's largest Native-owned and -managed bison herd.

THANK YOU

This progress, which you helped make possible, not only protects these vulnerable species but also supports the people who serve on the ground, who rely on natural resources for economic survival, and who are rallying their communities to protect wildlife and nature. Thank you for helping us protect tigers, elephants, rhinos, polar bears, bison, and many more species around the world.

