



FRESHWATER & FOOD

PROTECTING FRESHWATER ECOSYSTEMS, CONSERVING
CRITICAL LANDSCAPES, AND TRANSFORMING FOOD
SYSTEMS TO BE REGENERATIVE AND RESILIENT

THE CHALLENGES WE FACE

Freshwater and food are vital to human life and well-being. We depend on nature for both. Yet growing demands on land and water for food production, industry, energy, and economic development are exceeding planetary boundaries—simply put, we take more than the Earth can provide.

Degrading nature leads to climate change, extreme weather events, droughts, floods, wildfires, and the emergence of global pandemics like COVID-19. These in turn increase risks and have negative impacts on human development and well-being.

The Freshwater and Food team at WWF addresses two of the biggest threats to nature—**agriculture and infrastructure**.

By 2050, a future population of 10 billion is expected to **increase the demand for food production by 50% and increase built infrastructure by 75%** to meet global development needs.

By 2050, **5 billion people could suffer water scarcity and \$10 trillion could be lost from the global economy** due to climate change.

We must balance the current and future needs of people with the conservation of nature, upon which all life depends.



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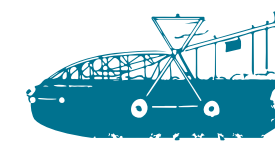
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**70% OF WATER USE
IS FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION**



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



**70% OF BIODIVERSITY LOSS
IS CAUSED BY AGRICULTURE**



**80% OF DEFORESTATION
IS CAUSED BY AGRICULTURAL
EXPANSION**

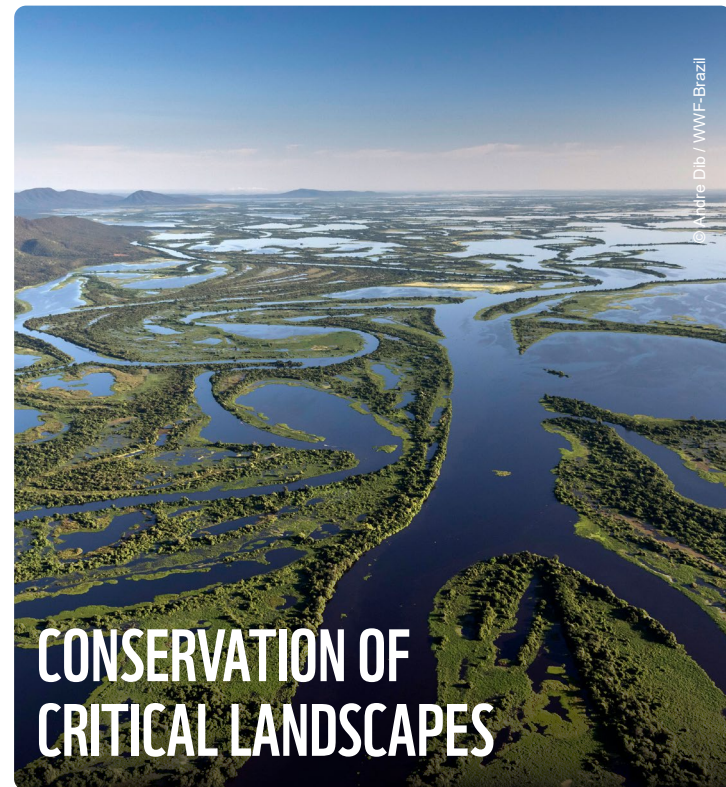


**92% OF FRESHWATER
MEGAFUNA
ARE THREATENED BY EXISTING AND
PLANNED HYDROPOWER DAMS**

OUR STRATEGY

Our Freshwater and Food work is focused around **four ambitious pillars**

Despite the challenges, agriculture, infrastructure, and other industries can be part of the solution. It will require working with Indigenous people and local communities, producers, corporations, and governments on the ground to address the degradation of nature and influence larger system change globally. WWF, alongside our partners, will deliver on both.



CONSERVATION OF CRITICAL LANDSCAPES

We conserve and protect some of the most biodiverse landscapes on Earth from the major threats of infrastructure and agriculture.

We work to keep the world's most biodiverse rivers free flowing—from the Amazon to the Greater Mekong—and are protecting freshwater ecosystems from poorly planned infrastructure, overextraction, and pollution. We facilitate transboundary water governance and help develop freshwater policies in the Pantanal, Kavango-Zambezi region (KAZA), and the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo.

We secure deforestation/conversion free supply chain commitments so that agricultural expansion does not lead to the degradation of critical landscapes. We conserve the world's last intact temperate grassland ecosystems—such as the Northern Great Plains and the Cerrado—through a working-lands approach, ensuring viable livelihoods for millions of people, including ranchers and Indigenous communities.



REGENERATIVE AND RESILIENT SYSTEMS

We transform the way food, commodities, and energy are produced so we can meet the needs of people without degrading nature.

We work with diverse stakeholders on adopting system-scale planning by providing alternative renewable energy solutions to hydropower dams—including wind and solar—so we can mitigate the degradation of freshwater ecosystems. We take a water stewardship approach that bridges corporate water management with broader conservation programs.

We facilitate sustainable food production systems, specifically protein—livestock, aquaculture, and feed—to ensure a nutritious food supply and support livelihoods while sustaining nature and mitigating climate change impacts. We identify business models for producers that support reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adopting regenerative agriculture practices. And we implement solutions to reduce global food loss and waste, and drive circularity from the field to the consumer.

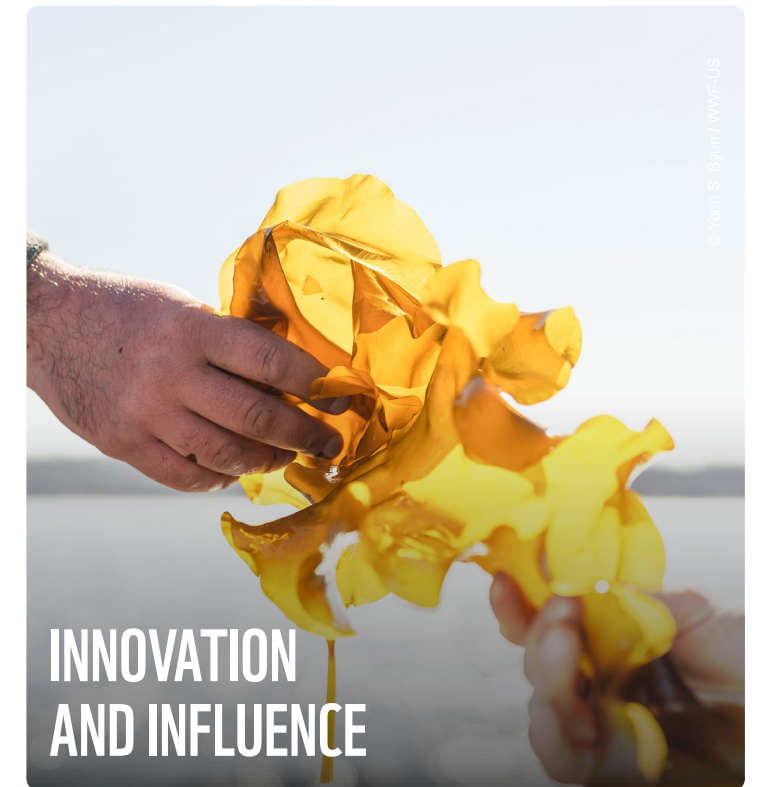


THRIVING PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

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

We collaborate with communities globally to manage precious soil and water resources, to mitigate impacts of development and climate change. Through partnerships like the CARE-WWF Alliance and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), and stakeholder engagement like the Basin Report Card, we support a shared vision for the development and conservation of natural resources that is centered on thriving people.

We unlock innovative financing solutions and empower local and Indigenous communities to develop and execute their own development conservation priorities. We build deforestation- and conversion-free supply chains and prioritize interventions that reinforce cultural identity, food sovereignty, and sustainable livelihoods to ensure that benefits and values are returned to local communities.



INNOVATION AND INFLUENCE

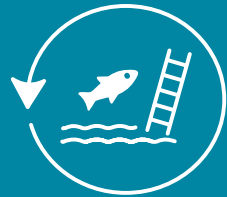
We combine innovation, scientific knowledge, policy analysis, finance, and technical expertise to have impact at scale.

We apply groundbreaking science and work with a wide range of partners, including corporations, academics, and think tanks, to advance cutting-edge conservation tools and methods, and tackle emerging threats. We provide technical expertise on the Science Based Targets Initiative, in which companies are taking action to address climate change and water impacts. We engage with the finance community on innovative financing models for sustainable infrastructure and nature-based solutions.

We make impact investments in innovations like seaweed farming to mitigate climate change and transform animal feed production.

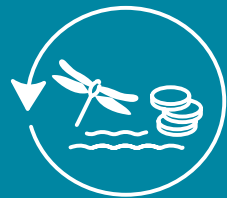
We influence production and consumption so that diets can be healthy, sustainable, and culturally and economically accessible for all.

OUR INITIATIVES



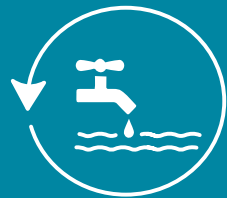
CONNECTED RIVERS OF RESILIENCE

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



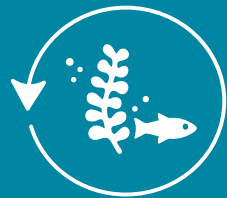
TRANSBOUNDARY GOVERNANCE & SUSTAINABLE FINANCE

Strengthening governance of healthy freshwater ecosystems through integrated basin management to promote transboundary connectivity and sustainable development that generates economic returns.



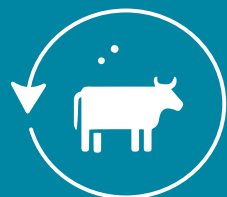
FRESHWATER & FOOD TRANSFORMATION

Transforming the way businesses manage their water and agriculture operations and enable collective action for scaled impact in landscapes and river basins.



SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE SYSTEMS

Conserving aquatic ecosystems and increasing efficient use of natural resources and demand for lower-impact seafood for vibrant livelihoods.



SUSTAINABLE LIVESTOCK AND FEED SYSTEMS

Halting the conversion and deforestation of remaining critical natural habitats by food production and reducing the use of water, energy, and land for production of livestock and feed.



FOOD LOSS & WASTE


Influencing governments and food businesses globally to halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses.



OUR 2030 GOALS

- Achieve zero deforestation and land conversion of native habitat due to agricultural expansion and infrastructure in our priority landscapes.
- Protect and restore rivers and their critical services for people and nature.
- Reduce freshwater degradation through improved water stewardship in textile, food, and beverage supply chains.
- Ensure that regenerative and resilient agroecosystems produce enough food to nourish everyone in the world.
- Halve the environmental footprint of food systems, with a priority on animal protein and feed commodities.
- Curtail global consumption of natural resources by ending loss, waste, and inefficiencies in food systems.
- Ensure Indigenous people and local communities are supported and empowered to determine their own conservation future, especially in our priority landscapes.





Our vision is to protect and conserve the world's freshwater ecosystems and critical landscapes, and transform food systems to be regenerative and resilient locally and globally.

It's a massive undertaking.

Our global influence, strategic partnerships, and local engagement mean that we are uniquely positioned to deliver.

With our partners across the world, we can ensure that people and nature thrive now and in the future.

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

For further information, please contact:

Melissa D. Ho
Senior Vice President, Freshwater and Food
melissa.ho@wwfus.org

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