



WWF

REPORT

INT

2018



# REPORTING ON OUR LIVING PLANET

## A GUIDE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

### THE VALUE OF NATURE

Nature provides us with everything we need to live, from the air we breathe, to drinking water, food and all the resources we use to make things and to power our homes, cars and factories. Over the past fifty years, the rapid growth of the world's population has led to a massive increase in the demand for land, energy and water. As a result, we are now using the Earth's resources faster than nature can renew them. We are also creating more waste than our planet can absorb.

Humans have only been around for 200,000 years, a tiny blip in the 4.5 billion years of our planet's history. Yet we have had a greater impact on the Earth than any other species. Human activity is changing every part of our planet. These changes are so great that scientists are saying that we have entered a new age – the Anthropocene, meaning 'the age of humans'. All over the world, we are cutting down forests, using too much water from rivers, depleting the oceans of fish and pushing some animals to extinction. For both people and wildlife to thrive, now and in the future, we need a healthy planet, with a rich variety of plants and animals and vibrant ecosystems. In nature, everything is connected. Like throwing a stone into a pond, the ripple effect of any changes touches every part of our planet. Understanding how our activities affect the natural world is important to find the best ways of protecting it.

### THE LIVING PLANET REPORT

The 2018 Living Planet report was produced by WWF, leading experts and other organisations to find out about the state of the planet and the main threats it faces. For the last twenty years, scientists have been measuring changes in the populations of thousands of animal species around the world, from counting the number of wildebeest in the savannah, to trapping the movement of tapirs on cameras in the Amazon rainforest. They have also looked at changes in where different species are found and their risk of extinction. Sadly, the report concludes that the variety of life on Earth and wildlife populations are disappearing fast.

# TOO MUCH PRESSURE ON OUR PLANET

The Living Planet report shows that populations of fish, birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles have fallen on average by 60% in less than 50 years (between 1970 and 2014). This is mainly due to the over-harvesting and illegal hunting of animals, agriculture and loss of habitats. The most significant decline has been seen in tropical rainforests and in rivers, lakes and wetlands around the world.

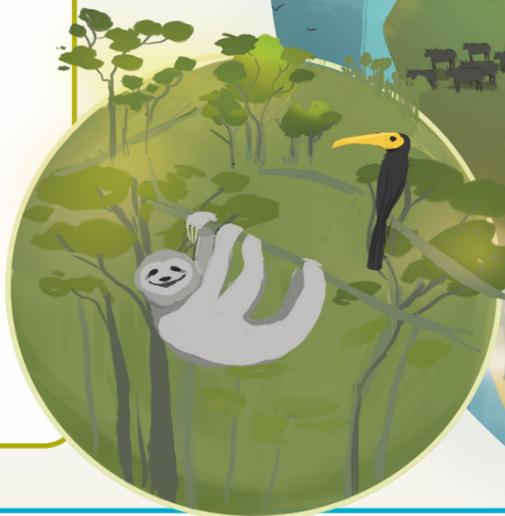
## INTENSIVE FARMING

Intensive farming has affected the quality of soil in many parts of the world. It has also led to the decline of bees and other insects that help to pollinate 75% of the food crops we grow, with fewer places for them to forage and nest.



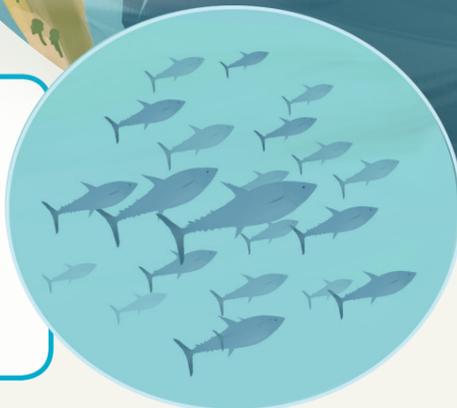
## VANISHING RAINFORESTS

Tropical rainforests have the greatest diversity of plants and animals on Earth. They also produce a lot of the oxygen we breathe and help to regulate the world's climate. Yet they are disappearing rapidly. Almost 20% of the Amazon rainforest has been cut down in just 50 years for timber, farming and to make way for roads, mines and cities.



## DEPLETED OCEANS

The number of fish in the world's seas has fallen dramatically. Every year, we take millions of tonnes of fish out of the ocean without allowing stocks to replenish themselves. Plastic pollution is also a major threat to marine life, from the surface to the bottom of the ocean. According to scientists, plastic particles can be found in 90% of the world's seabirds!



## MELTING ICE CAPS

Changes in the Earth's climate due to human activity are affecting animals such as polar bears and walrus in the Arctic. Sea ice is vital for them to dive from and hunt for food. The ice also supports the growth of tiny algae which, in turn, are food for fish and krill. With our warming climate and the loss of sea ice, food is harder to find.



## WILDLIFE TRADE

Many iconic animals such as tigers, elephants and rhinos are illegally hunted for their fur, tusks or bones. Around 90% of African elephants have been lost in the past century.



## FRESHWATER HABITATS IN DANGER

Although rivers, lakes and wetlands cover a tiny part of the Earth's surface (less than 1%), they are home to more than 10% of known species of animals. They also provide us with water to drink and to grow food. Sadly, these habitats are threatened due to pollution, using too much water and the building of dams on rivers.



**WITH MANY ORGANISATIONS WORKING TO PROTECT WILDLIFE, THERE ARE SOME SUCCESS STORIES.**

FOR EXAMPLE, THE NUMBER OF HUMPBACK WHALES, PANDAS AND TIGERS HAS RECOVERED IN RECENT YEARS. THESE GOOD NEWS STORIES NEED TO BECOME THE NORM.

## WHAT CAN WE DO TO BEND THE CURVE?



To stop the decline of the natural systems that support us and all other animals on the planet, we need real change, all over the world. The challenge we face is to find ways of meeting the needs of our growing population while protecting nature and preventing climate change. Everyone – governments, businesses, communities and individuals – has a part to play.

Most of the world's countries have already agreed on clear goals to work together to stop the decline of wildlife and nature. Adults and politicians now need to TAKE ACTION and put nature first.



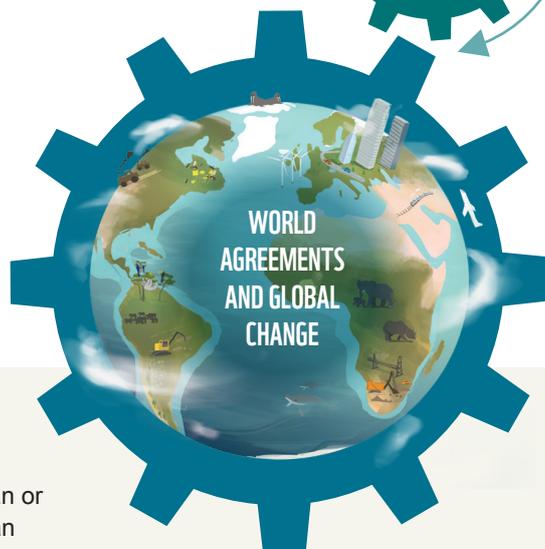
## WHAT THE WORLD HAS AGREED TO DO

*'By 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people.'*

Convention on Biological Diversity vision for 2050.

*By 2030, 'Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species.'*

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals target 15.5



## EVEN SMALL CHANGES CAN ADD UP TO BIG ACTIONS

- Speak out! Talk about the importance of protecting nature with your friends, families and teachers.
- Start a movement in your school or community to help the planet by planting trees or saving energy.
- Think about the food you eat. The ways in which we grow and produce our food has a massive impact on the planet. Eating more plant food helps! Producing 1kg of beef requires 70 times as much land as producing 1kg of vegetables!
- Write a letter to a local politician or business and tell them about an environmental issue that is close to your heart. And don't be afraid to ask questions!
- Help scientists to record the variety of wildlife in your area by taking part in a citizen science programme.
- Create habitats for wildlife in your own backyard (e.g. a bug hotel, rotten logs for beetles, heaps of branches and leaves for hedgehogs)
- Grow plants to attract bees, butterflies and other pollinators.
- Use less plastic, reuse and recycle.
- Buy things that last for a long time and can be repaired or recycled. Things like bicycles and clothes can be mended.
- Enjoy and discover the wonders of nature around you.



**Why we are here**  
To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.  
[panda.org/lpr](http://panda.org/lpr)

**BIODIVERSITY: THE VARIETY OF LIVING THINGS AND ECOSYSTEMS IN A PARTICULAR PLACE - WHETHER IT IS A SMALL AREA OR THE WHOLE PLANET.**