

PROTECTING WILDLIFE FOR A HEALTHY PLANET

PROGRESS REPORT

With your support, we are protecting some of the world's most vulnerable species, from tigers and elephants to polar bears and bison. Through this work, we are also supporting the people who rely on natural resources for economic survival and helping communities protect and advocate for these magnificent creatures.

WWF is using proven conservation techniques and innovative new solutions to tackle pressing threats to wildlife. We are protecting ecosystems, managing human-wildlife conflict, and stopping poachers in their tracks to ensure a future for our planet's most endangered species. We are also working to end the sale of animals in high-risk markets where the lines between humans and nature blur—creating a dangerous breeding ground for diseases like COVID-19.

As detailed in this report, your generosity has made significant conservation progress possible in the past year. Thank you for helping us advance wildlife conservation on a global scale.



ENDING WILDLIFE CRIME

Rising global wealth and demand for wildlife products have fueled an international poaching and trafficking crisis that threatens many of the world's most vulnerable species. Trafficking is not only harmful to wildlife but has the potential to create conditions for the emergence of new zoonotic diseases like COVID-19. With your support, we are turning the tide and making crucial progress towards shutting down wildlife crime for the sake of nature and humans alike.

STOP THE POACHING

Last July, WWF released a new report entitled *Silence of the Snares* that examines a phenomenon driving wildlife, including tigers, to extinction. Our analysis indicates that over 12 million snares are set each year throughout protected areas in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. These simple but deadly traps are mostly used to capture wildlife for the illegal wildlife trade and supply an increasing demand for wild meat and animal products in urban areas. Snares are among the greatest threats to the long-term presence of tigers in Southeast Asia, not only killing tigers but also their prey. Backed by the findings in our report, WWF is now urging governments in Southeast Asia to strengthen legislation to deter snaring; invest in more resources to support patrolling and monitoring of protected areas; adequately train rangers to safely identify snares and prevent poacher incursions into protected areas; and limit the purchase, sale, transport, and consumption of endangered wildlife species.

END THE TRAFFICKING

Founded in 2018, the Coalition to End Wildlife Trafficking Online was born out of the shift in illegal wildlife trade from physical to online markets. The Coalition, convened by WWF, TRAFFIC, and the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), now consists of more than 30 e-commerce, tech, and social media companies including Alibaba, eBay, Etsy, Facebook, Google, Instagram, and Pinterest. While strengthened wildlife policies, monitoring and data sharing from wildlife experts, and efforts of the Coalition itself have contributed to its overall success, citizen science volunteers have played an instrumental role. To date, the Coalition's Cyber Spotters have flagged over 7,000 prohibited online listings which



have been removed in real time by Coalition company enforcement teams. These Cyber Spotters have also uncovered a bevy of new seller keywords and have identified wildlife trafficking trends that have improved the Coalition's monitoring efforts.

END THE DEMAND

Human health and the health of our environment are inextricably linked. Zoonotic diseases—those that can spread between animals and people—occur when we erode barriers between humans and animals. As human activity encroaches on the world's wildest places, harmful diseases are emerging at an increasing rate. Informed by science, and in partnership with public health, development, and conservation experts, WWF is designing initiatives to stop the spillover of disease—starting with wildlife markets.

While wildlife markets are not always dangerous, markets selling high-risk species in unregulated conditions can create a perfect storm for zoonotic disease transmission and new pandemics. At the beginning of the current pandemic, WWF commissioned a study that interviewed 5,000 people in Asian countries that have active wildlife trade markets to gauge opinion of wildlife markets. The study found that respondents overwhelmingly supported government action to close illegal and unregulated markets. In April 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO) and partners called for countries to suspend sales of live wild mammals in traditional food markets, also known as “wet markets,” to prevent the emergence of new deadly diseases, such as COVID-19.

RESTORING CRITICAL WILDLIFE POPULATIONS

Protecting and restoring wildlife populations is at the core of WWF's mission. Together with our partners, we are expanding populations, protecting landscapes, restoring habitats, engaging local communities, and creating lasting change.

ELEPHANTS

Residents of Kapau located near Zambia's Sioma Ngwezi National Park in the KAZA Conservation Area have long shared their limited water resources with their livestock and park wildlife, which often leads to human-wildlife conflicts.

Last year, to mitigate such conflicts, WWF installed a solar powered borehole. Water is now pumped into a 5,200-gallon tank which supplies a nearby community water tap. Instances of human-wildlife conflict have dropped as cattle now have access to water near the new borehole instead of in the park where they are more vulnerable. Since water can now be gathered closer to their homes, and they no longer have to spend several hours a day walking to gather water for their families, women are able to participate in community meetings and decision-making processes. And, community members are creating gardens near their homes, thereby improving community nutrition levels. Meanwhile, some residents are selling produce, generating additional household income.

RHINOS

Once numbering more than 500,000, as few as 29,000 rhinos now roam Africa and Asia. Yet, with your help, rhino conservation has gained traction and populations are on the rebound. In Nepal, the 2021 National Rhino Count showed a promising 16% increase in the country's rhino population. Based on the survey, conducted by the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation in Nepal from March to April 2021—and in collaboration with WWF-Nepal and others—there are an estimated 752 rhinos in the country, up from the 2015 estimate of 645.



BISON

Last fall and winter, 135 plains bison were released onto a portion of the Wolakota Buffalo Range on the land of the Sicangu Oyate, commonly known as the Rosebud Sioux Tribe in South Dakota. They are the first of what will be a herd of 1,500 bison—the beginnings of what will become North America's largest Native-owned and managed bison herd. Excitingly, in the winter months of 2021, two bison calves were born—the first to be born on this land in the last 140 years. The Wolakota Buffalo Range will provide ecological, economic, and cultural benefits to the Sicangu Oyate and exemplifies the visionary work that Indigenous communities are spearheading, which WWF wholeheartedly supports.

In the spring of 2021, thanks to thousands of generous donors, WWF raised significant funds that will allow us to expand the range and make more than 20,000 acres of native grassland habitat accessible to bison. This exciting project is being advanced by a partnership between the Rosebud Economic Development Corporation (REDCO) and WWF with support from Tribal Land Enterprise, the Rosebud Sioux Tribes' land management corporation, and the US Department of the Interior.

POLAR BEARS

Understanding where polar bears are and what they are doing in real time is incredibly valuable information for wildlife researchers. Radio collars have long been used to track mammal movements, but placing collars on polar bears is difficult and, due to the Arctic's harsh conditions, collars frequently malfunction.

With the goal of developing a lightweight, accurate device, WWF worked with technology companies, polar bear researchers, Alaska Native colleagues, engineers, and innovation leaders to reimagine satellite telemetry devices for polar bears and began developing a lightweight ear tag for polar bears. Now, after four years of planning and testing, we are on the brink of producing ear tags that will communicate daily location, temperature, and movement data. The final approval and actual placing of the tags on bears will be expensive and logistically challenging, but with immense payoff. For the sake of not only polar bears, but other at-risk species, we are eagerly working towards testing our prototype in the wild and scaling up this critical technology to help learn more about species like polar bears.



THANK YOU

Thanks to your commitment, we are protecting tigers, elephants, rhinos, bison, and many more species around the world. With you by our side, WWF continues to create some of the most successful wildlife recovery stories on Earth. Our efforts, in turn, are helping to protect rich and varied ecosystems while ensuring people continue to benefit from nature—and rallying communities to protect and advocate for these remarkable animals.

Thank you for making this work possible.

