“We face the double emergencies of human-induced climate change and biodiversity loss, threatening the well-being of current and future generations. At the COP15 biodiversity conference this December, leaders have an opportunity to reset our broken relationship with the natural world and deliver a healthier, more sustainable future for all with an ambitious nature-positive global biodiversity agreement. In the face of our escalating nature crisis, it’s essential this agreement delivers immediate action on the ground, including through a transformation of the sectors driving nature loss, and financial support to developing countries.”

Marco Lambertini, Director General of WWF International

WWF’s Living Planet Report (LPR) is released every two years, providing a clear picture of how species populations are faring around the world and giving us an important indication of overall ecosystem health. This time it shows us that monitored wildlife populations — mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and fish — have seen a devastating 69% drop on average since 1970.

The Living Planet Index (LPI), provided within the LPR, is produced by ZSL (Zoological Society of London). Based on the biggest dataset yet, the 2022 LPI measures how species are responding to pressures in their environment driven by biodiversity loss and climate change, and highlights the detrimental effects of our broken relationship with the natural world.

This fourteenth edition of the LPI reveals shocking figures and in response we need transformative systems change if we’re going to reverse nature loss and secure a nature-positive world by 2030 for people and wildlife. The LPR argues that increasing conservation and restoration efforts, producing and consuming food in particular more sustainably, and rapidly and deeply decarbonising all sectors can mitigate the twin crises. The authors call on policymakers to transform economies so that natural resources are properly valued.
WHICH NEW SPECIES HAVE BEEN ADDED TO THE LPI DATABASE OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS?

Since the previous LPI in 2020, in this edition almost 32,000 species populations – with more than 838 new species and just over 11,000 new populations – have been added. The new data has led to a significant increase in fish species being represented (29% more than 2020 with an additional 481 species) and has substantially improved coverage from previously under-represented areas with high levels of biodiversity, such as Brazil. This is partly thanks to increased sourcing of data in languages other than English, with work by WWF-Brazil and the University of Sao Paulo collecting data in Portuguese. Thanks to their efforts, there are now 3,269 populations of 1,002 Brazilian species (575 of which are new to the database) included in the LPI.

DID YOU KNOW
THE STATE OF OUR NATURAL WORLD

Living Planet Index (LPI)
The LPI is an early warning indicator on the health of nature. It tracks the abundance of populations of mammals, birds, fish, reptiles and amphibians around the world.

Green Status assessments
The Green Status tool assesses the recovery of species populations and measures conservation success and impact.

IUCN Red List Index (RLI)
The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species assesses the relative risk of a species’ extinction. More than 140,000 species have been evaluated using information on life-history traits, population, distribution size and structure, and their change over time to assign them to one of eight categories: Extinct, Extinct in the Wild, Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable, Near Threatened, Least Concern, or Data Deficient.

Biodiversity risk maps
An analysis using data from the IUCN Red List that allows the overlay of six key threats — agriculture, hunting, logging, pollution, invasive species and climate change — to highlight ‘threat hotspots’ for terrestrial vertebrate

The Biodiversity Intactness Index (BII)
The BII estimates how much of an area’s natural biodiversity remains, helping us to understand past, current and future changes to nature.

HOW THE LIVING PLANET INDEX CALCULATED?
Across the globe, wild animals are counted for a variety of different reasons. If such monitoring is done over multiple years in a particular area, one can say something about how the number of individuals in this location has changed. The LPI uses these changes in population sizes to establish whether, on average, the relative abundance of monitored species has increased, decreased or stayed the same. To do this, information on changes in abundance are taken from the Living Planet Database and then averaged together.
WHAT THE INDICATORS ARE TELLING US

• **WWF’s 2022 Living Planet Report** an average 69% decline in monitored wildlife populations over the 48-year period spanning 1970 to 2018.

• **Latin America and the Caribbean regions** have seen the largest decline of monitored wildlife populations globally, with an average decline of 94% between 1970 and 2018.

• **During the same period**, monitored populations in Africa plummeted by 66%, while Asia Pacific’s monitored populations fell by 55%.

• **Freshwater populations** have declined the most compared to other species groups, with an average 83% decline between 1970 and 2018. The IUCN Red List shows cycads are the most threatened species, while corals are declining the fastest, followed by amphibians.

• **Around the world**, the report indicates that the main drivers of wildlife population decline are habitat degradation and loss, exploitation, the introduction of invasive species, pollution, climate change and disease.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ‘SPECIES’ AND ‘POPULATIONS’?

‘Species’ and ‘population’ are two levels of classification of organisms in ecology. A species is a group of similar organisms who can interbreed with each other, whereas a population is a group of one species that live within the same geographic area. Populations make up a species. The LPI looks at species populations to determine whether species abundance has increased or declined. The LPI does not tell us about the total number of individuals in a species.
WHY THE DECLINE IN NATURE MATTERS

The LPR 2022 warns that humanity’s increasing destruction of nature is having catastrophic impacts not only on wildlife populations but also on human health and livelihoods, food security and all other aspects of our lives.

BUILDING A NATURE-POSITIVE SOCIETY

Based on examples and analysis from across the world, ranging from the Amazon to Bolivia, Canada, Zambia, Kenya, Indonesia and Australia, we know that the health of our planet is declining. We also know why, meaning that we have the knowledge to stop climate change and biodiversity loss. Now is the time to ensure we put this knowledge to use as part of system-wide changes to how we produce and consume, the technology we use, and our economic and financial systems.

While more and more governments have signalled they are prioritizing nature and working to combat climate change, the LPR 2022 warns that action taken so far has not been enough to achieve critical planetary goals, such as limiting global warming to 1.5°C and reversing biodiversity loss by 2030 for a nature-positive world.

The UN’s Convention of Biological Diversity COP15 conference is less than two months away. This is a once-in-a-decade opportunity to secure an ambitious global biodiversity agreement that binds all governments to a set of global commitments to halt and reverse biodiversity decline. We need transformative systems change if we’re to course correct and secure a healthier, more sustainable future people and the planet – world leaders must step up at COP15 and adopt a ‘Paris’-style agreement capable of delivering a nature-positive world by 2030.

DID YOU KNOW

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN USING THE WORD ‘LOSS’ AND ‘DECLINE’?

When speaking of the LPI, we use the word ‘decline’ rather than ‘loss’ as the LPI highlights an average trend in population change and not an average of the total number of individual animals or species lost.

The percentage change in the Living Planet Index reflects the average proportional change in animal population sizes tracked over 48 years – not the number of individual animals lost nor the number of populations lost.

CAN THIS LPI BE COMPARED WITH PREVIOUS EDITIONS OF THE LIVING PLANET REPORT?

The LPI 2020 and 2022 should not be directly compared. The datasets constantly change and expand, which means there is constant improvement in the accuracy of the index, but they are not directly comparable.

Declines in abundance are early warning indicators on the overall health of ecosystems, and serious declines are a proxy for the unravelling of nature. At the same time, population trends are responsive – therefore if conservation or policy measures are successful, species abundance trends will quickly show this.

1 The 2022 global Living Planet Index (LPI) shows an average 69% decline in monitored vertebrate wildlife populations. The percentage change in the index reflects the average proportional change in animal population sizes tracked over 48 years – not the number of individual animals lost nor the number of populations lost. 30 species monitored across the globe, was a decline of 69%. The white line shows the index values and the shaded areas represent the statistical certainty surrounding the trend (95% statistical certainty, range 63% to 75%). Source: WWF/ZSL (2022).
WWF’S MISSION IS TO STOP THE DEGRADATION OF THE PLANET’S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND TO BUILD A FUTURE IN WHICH PEOPLE LIVE IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

- CONSERVING THE WORLD’S BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
- ENSURING THAT THE USE OF RENEWABLE NATURAL RESOURCES IS SUSTAINABLE
- PROMOTING THE REDUCTION OF POLLUTION AND WASTEFUL CONSUMPTION