

NATURE IN CRISIS

A WWF BRIEFING FOR POLICYMAKERS

OCTOBER 2022



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OUR SOCIETY IS AT ITS MOST IMPORTANT FORK IN HISTORY, AND FACING ITS DEEPEST SYSTEMS CHANGE CHALLENGE AROUND WHAT IS PERHAPS THE MOST EXISTENTIAL OF ALL OUR RELATIONSHIPS: THE ONE WITH NATURE

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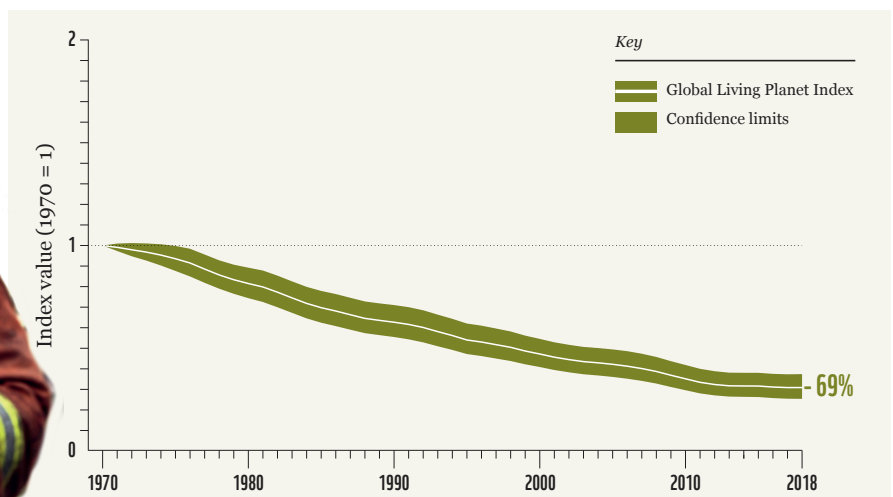
1. SETTING THE SCENE

Today we face the double, interlinked emergencies of human-induced climate change and biodiversity loss, threatening the well-being of current and future generations.

Record heat waves, droughts and forest fires are increasingly frequent with devastating human and economic consequences, further weakening the ability of governments to cope with the impacts of COVID and the Ukraine war on supply chains and the global economy. Immediate action on the climate and biodiversity emergencies is needed to strengthen the resilience of societies around the world.

The Living Planet Index (LPI), which has been tracking the health of nature over almost 50 years, clearly shows the extent of the biodiversity crisis. Its most comprehensive finding to date reveals an alarming average plunge of 69% in the relative abundance of monitored wildlife populations (mammals, fish, reptiles, birds and amphibians) around the world between 1970 and 2018. Latin America shows the greatest regional plummeting in average population abundance (94%); while freshwater species populations have seen the greatest overall global drop (83%).

Figure 1: The global Living Planet Index



WWF/ZSL. (2022). The Living Planet Index database.

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The LPI provides evidence on the progress and impact of policies and agreements, making it a critical **headline indicator** to be included in the monitoring framework for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (post-2020 GBF).

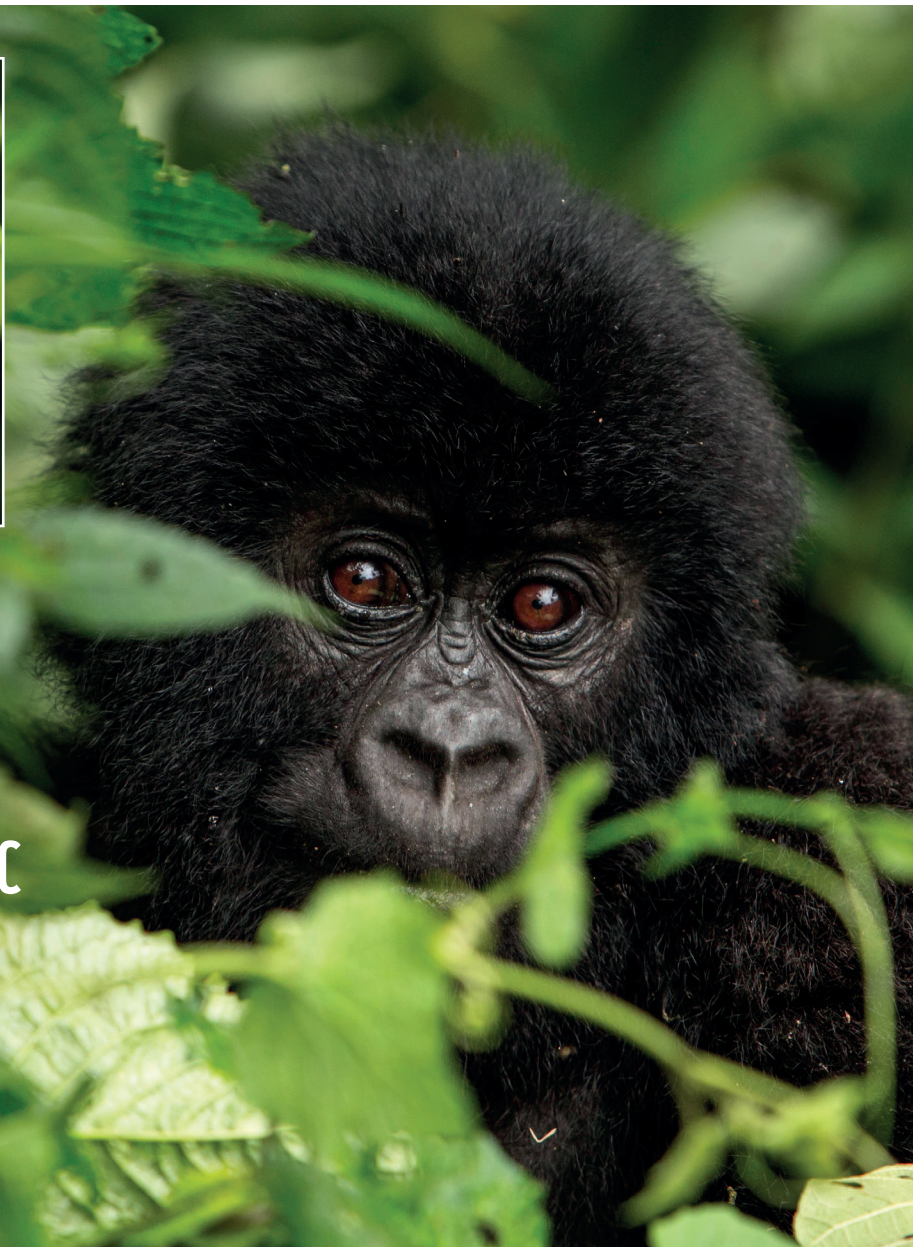
Biodiversity loss and climate change are primarily driven by human economic activities. These human drivers, which include continual increases in greenhouse gas emissions, and the unsustainable production and consumption of our natural resources, need to change. For the sake of people and the planet we must transform the way we live and do business, towards a net-zero, nature-positive economic model, where impacts on climate and nature are accounted for, natural resources and nature's services are properly valued, and environmental externalities disclosed and built into our economies and financial markets.



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2. A ROADMAP TOWARDS A NATURE-POSITIVE AND NET-ZERO EMISSIONS FUTURE

We must act now to reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and keep global warming to 1.5°C

We need to reverse biodiversity loss and achieve a **nature-positive world by 2030** – so that there is more nature at the end of this decade than there was at its start – in order to avoid the worst impacts of biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse, and ensure that we are resilient and adaptive to the impacts of climate change for humanity’s wellbeing, health¹ and security². A global ambition to reverse biodiversity loss and secure a nature-positive world by 2030 can be our guiding star, in the same way that the goal of limiting global warming to 2°C, and preferably 1.5°C, guides our efforts on climate. **This is why the post-2020 GBF should adopt a nature-positive Mission.**

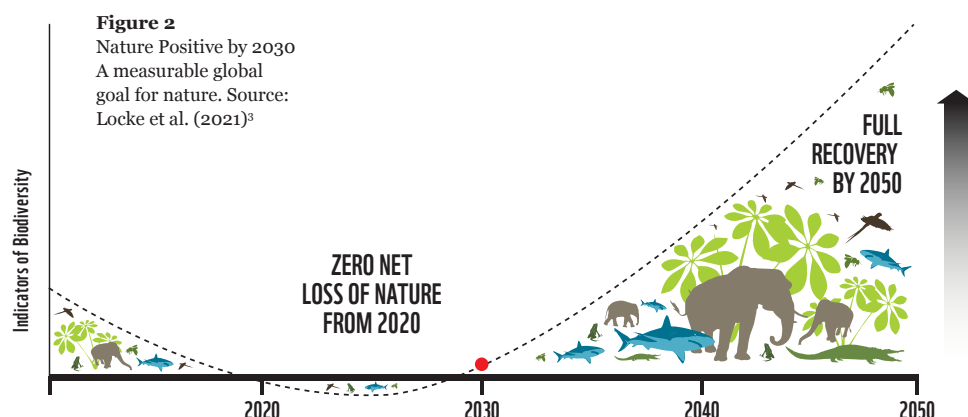
Increasing conservation and restoration efforts is key, but this will fail to achieve a nature-positive world if it is not complemented by ambitious, equitable and transformative action addressing unsustainable production and consumption. WWF analysis into the impact of production and consumption patterns has found that in order to reverse biodiversity loss by 2030, **the global footprint of production and consumption must be halved**⁴. Many developed countries are “encouraging” deforestation in developing nations through international trade and demand for products. Wealthier countries with much higher footprints need to do more than countries with smaller ones. We can halve our global footprint by 2030 through taking nature-positive, transformative actions in the way we consume and produce. Land-use change is the biggest current threat to nature, especially agricultural expansion. WWF also conducted a comprehensive assessment on our food system and food consumption, which shows that by moving to sustainable, healthy and culturally appropriate diets we can reduce agricultural land use by at least 41% and wildlife loss by up to 46% (while reducing premature deaths due to unhealthy diets by at least 20%)⁵. Transformative actions in sectors such as agriculture, infrastructure and fisheries are equally impactful.



41%

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If we are unable to limit global warming to 1.5°C, climate change is likely to become the dominant cause of biodiversity loss in the coming decades and will have devastating impacts on economies and societies everywhere, with the poorest suffering the most. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) advises that we can and must **halve global greenhouse gas emissions by 2030**. This requires immediate and deep decarbonisation in all sectors – energy, buildings, transport, industry, agriculture and land use⁶.

The current trends of our interlinked climate and biodiversity crises can be reversed, but neither will be successfully resolved unless both are tackled together. Reversing the destruction and degradation of natural ecosystems, which is good for biodiversity, will realize substantial co-benefits for climate action – building on ambitious reductions in fossil fuel emissions as a precondition – and to people⁷. For example, restoration of mangroves and coastal wetlands sequesters carbon, while also reducing coastal erosion and protecting against storm surges, thus, reducing the risks from sea level rise and extreme weather. Effective policies, regulations and market instruments for **nature-based solutions** (NbS) like these need to be scaled up and applied more widely and equitably.

Action on biodiversity loss is a win-win-win for nature, the climate and people: well-designed, rights-based and equitable NbS to protect, restore and sustainably manage biodiversity have a significant role to play in mitigating and adapting to the devastating impacts of climate change, and also yield benefits for people's livelihoods, nature and food security⁸.



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ACTION ON BIODIVERSITY LOSS IS A WIN-WIN- WIN FOR NATURE, THE CLIMATE AND PEOPLE:

WELL-DESIGNED, RIGHTS-BASED AND EQUITABLE NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS TO PROTECT, RESTORE AND SUSTAINABLY MANAGE BIODIVERSITY. NBS HAVE A SIGNIFICANT ROLE TO PLAY IN MITIGATING AND ADAPTING TO THE DEVASTATING IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE, AND ALSO YIELD BENEFITS FOR PEOPLE'S LIVELIHOODS, NATURE AND FOOD SECURITY.



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3. IMPLICATIONS FOR GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY MAKING

Following on from UNCCD COP15 in May 2022, UNFCCC COP27 and CBD COP15 will be held back-to-back in November and December 2022, providing a long-awaited policy 'super year' opportunity for the Rio Conventions on sustainable development. After delays due to the COVID pandemic, there is a need to bend the curve on climate change and nature loss by 2030 through key global policy processes. Below is an outline of what is needed.

UNFCCC COP27

(November): COP27 is a perfect opportunity to focus on acutely needed on-the-ground implementation, supported by increasing and accessible finance, technology and capacity building support. It should secure a cover decision referencing nature-based solutions so that they are formally embraced by the UNFCCC. Parties and other decision makers must ALSO emphasize the following:

- *Immediate implementation of urgent climate mitigation actions* over the next 1-2 years, on a sector by sector basis, including through international cooperative actions. Implementation should aim to go beyond measures and targets identified in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), drive the transition to a net-zero emissions, climate resilient economy by mid-century powered by renewable energy, ensure that global emissions in 2025 are lower than in 2020 and cut global emissions by half in 2030.
- *Planning for increasingly ambitious emissions reduction goals for 2035 as well as for 2030*, including through the Global Stocktake and the Work Programme on pre-2030 mitigation ambition.
- *Strengthening climate adaptation and resilience* through national, regional and local adaptation programs as outlined in the National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), Adaptation Communication (AdCom), NDCs etc, with enhanced and easily accessible grant-based financing as well as enhanced technology and capacity building support.
- *Meeting and exceeding the US\$100 billion objective from developed countries this year*, with all countries working to align all public and private finance flows with climate and biodiversity goals and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

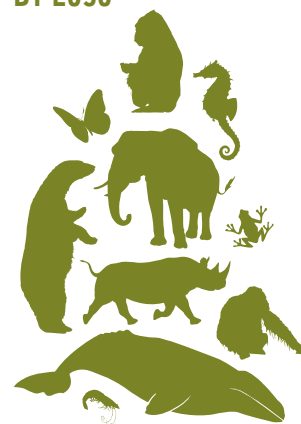
CBD COP15

(December): negotiations on the post-2020 GBF have not sufficiently progressed and are at risk of failing. The situation must be salvaged to avoid CBD COP15 resulting in a GBF that is insufficient to address the nature crisis:

- *High level political engagement and leadership:* To quickly resolve differences between Parties on key issues, particularly financing and resource mobilization.

2030 CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATURE LOSS

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- **Bridging the gap between political commitment and the post-2020 GBF:** In many areas the draft post-2020 GBF falls far short of what is needed to reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 for a nature-positive world and stay within 1.5°C of global warming, and what has been committed by world leaders in multi-country declarations, statements and resolutions⁹. These areas include: a nature-positive mission, species extinctions & abundance, sustainable use and sustainable production & consumption, nature-based solutions, harmful subsidies, area-based conservation, the rights-based approach, the implementation mechanism and finance and resource mobilization. These global commitments should be reflected in the text of the post-2020 GBF.
- **Losing no more time for implementation:** After COP15 and the agreement of the post-2020 GBF, countries should immediately update their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) to align with the post-2020 GBF and the ambition to reverse biodiversity loss by 2030. Ideally, they would also be aligned with their NDCs and NAPs to ensure an integrated approach to solving the climate and biodiversity crises. To ensure ownership by all, a whole of society approach should be applied to the updating and implementation of the NBSAPs, using multi-stakeholder processes, including rights holders and other civil society actors as well as productive sectors. Whole-of-government approaches with leadership from central agencies will be needed to ensure buy-in from across government portfolios, departments and ministries.

CONCLUSION

Developing nations and the most vulnerable groups and communities are most exposed to the negative impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss. Catastrophic events are already being experienced around the world. Policymakers must take action to mark 2022 as a 'super year' for climate, biodiversity and sustainable development, and put in place the integrated, transformative policies and actions needed to keep climate change to 1.5°C and halve the global footprint of production and consumption by 2030. Acting now for an equitable, nature-positive and net-zero emissions world will ensure a safer, healthier and more sustainable future for all.

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FOOTNOTES

- 1 **The loss of nature and rise of pandemics | WWF**
- 2 **The nature of conflict and peace: The links between environment, security and peace and their importance for the United Nations | Climate-Diplomacy**
- 3 193 Locke, H., Rockström, J., Bakker, P., Bapna, M., Gough, M., Lambertini, M., Morris, J., Zabey, E. & Zurita, P. (2021). A Nature-Positive World: the Global Goal for Nature, Naturepositive.org. <<https://f.hubspotusercontent20.net/hubfs/4783129/Nature%20Positive%20The%20Global%20Goal%20for%20Nature%20paper.pdf>>
- 4 Different footprint metrics show that we need to reduce our footprint in the 40-60% range. See Metabolic & WWF (2020) "**Halving the Footprint of Production and Consumption**".
- 5 <https://planetbaseddiets.panda.org/>
- 6 IPCC (2022) "**Sixth Assessment Report - Mitigation of Climate Change - Summary for Policymakers**".
- 7 IPBES-IPCC (2021) **Co-sponsored Workshop Report on Biodiversity and Climate Change**.
- 8 See the UNEA-5 resolution: Nature-based Solutions for supporting sustainable development **UNEP/EA.5/Res.5**
- 9 This includes: CBD documents (the Kunming Declaration and the Aichi Targets), commitments from world leaders such as the Leaders' Pledge for Nature (endorsed by 94 CBD Parties); the High Ambition Coalition for Nature & People (endorsed by 100+ countries); the Global Ocean Alliance (endorsed by 72 countries), the CBD PreCOP joint coalition statement (endorsed by 116 CBD parties); the G7 2030 Nature Compact; the G20 Rome Leaders' Declaration; and IUCN WCC 2020 Resolution 116, voted in favor by 98% of IUCN members from the category of state and governmental agencies, G7 leaders communiqué 2022, **Joint statement to step up global ambition to address the interdependent crises of biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation and climate change (endorsed by 58 countries of which 57 are CBD parties)**.



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



Working to sustain the natural
world for the benefit of people
and wildlife.

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