

The broken biodiversity promise

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The critically endangered Araripe Manakin *Antilophia bokermanni*. Credit: Image courtesy of Andy & Gill Swash (worldwildlifeimages.com)

Back in 2002, world leaders gathered for the Convention on Biological Diversity and made a promise to slow the rate of biodiversity loss around the globe by 2010. However, a new analysis using the Convention's own framework shows that this goal has not been met--and that the pressures facing Earth's biodiversity continue to increase, researchers report in the April 30 issue of *Science*.

Stuart Butchart and colleagues compiled 31 specific indicators, including species numbers, population sizes, rates of deforestation, and ongoing conservation efforts around the world. The researchers assessed these

indicators with global data spanning from 1970 to 2005 and found that the indicators of robust [biodiversity](#) showed declines over the years, while indicators of pressures on global biodiversity showed increases.

Despite some local successes in certain areas of the world, particularly on protected lands, Butchart and his colleagues found no indication that the rate of biodiversity loss has been slowing in recent years. They say that increasing pressure on the world's species, coupled with inadequate responses, have fated the Convention on Biological Diversity to fall short of its goals for 2010.

If world governments are serious about preserving Earth's species, these researchers argue that reversing detrimental policies, integrating biodiversity into land-use decisions, and boosting funding for policies that tackle biodiversity loss head-on is the only realistic route to take.

More information: "Global Biodiversity: Indicators of Recent Declines," by S.H.M. Butchart. *Science*, April 30.

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