

# Nature matters—and it is sending us an SOS that we can no longer ignore

October 31 2018

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Credit: Adriano Gambarini / WWF-Brazil

Planet earth, nature and us. We are all linked in such a subtle and clever way that we don't even know how lucky we are—until it changes. Yesterday we relied on nature, today we rely on nature, and tomorrow

we will still rely on nature.

No matter how much we advance as a species, we cannot survive without a healthy planet. And yet we are punching holes in our [safety net](#) day by day. WWF's Living Planet Report 2018, released today, illustrates the extent of human impact on the planet. In little over 40 years, pressures and threats linked largely to human activity have caused a 60 percent decline, on average, in global wildlife populations.

So why does it matter so much? What do nature and the planet actually do for us? Here are a few examples:

Globally, nature provides services worth around US\$125 trillion a year. We depend on it for the food we eat, the water we drink and the air we breathe. Crops that are partially pollinated by animals account for 35 percent of [global food production](#). Nearly 200 million people depend on coral reefs for protection against storm surge and thrashing waves, a buffer needed more than ever in an increasingly warming world. And at least 70 percent of new small molecule drugs introduced over the past 25 years have come from a [natural](#) source.

And yet, in the 20th century, freshwater fish have had the highest extinction rate worldwide among vertebrates. Rainforests are shrinking: almost 20 per cent of the Amazon has disappeared in just 50 years. And in the same time period, [global average temperature](#) has risen at 170 times the background rate. We have taken almost 6 billion tonnes of fish and other seafood from the world's oceans since 1950, and at the same time, today 90 per cent of the world's seabirds are estimated to have fragments of plastic in their stomachs.

Despite the sad and shameful story here, these numbers must not make us give up; they must spur us on. Together, we can seize the small but definite window of opportunity the world has to protect and restore

nature globally.

So, what can we do? In our own daily lives, we can make sustainable choices—whether this be using less plastic, curbing our food waste or opting for eco-friendly and sustainably-sourced products—our choices have—and can make—an impact.

We must speak up as consumers and as citizens; use our voice to encourage businesses and governments to shift to more sustainable policies and practices. And we should spread the word—encourage our family and friends to join.

Together, we can be the generation that changes our relationship with the planet, for the better.

**More information:** WWF Living Planet Report 2018.  
[d2ouvy59p0dg6k.cloudfront.net/ ... report\\_spreads\\_1.pdf](https://d2ouvy59p0dg6k.cloudfront.net/...report_spreads_1.pdf)

Provided by WWF

Citation: Nature matters—and it is sending us an SOS that we can no longer ignore (2018, October 31) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2018-10-nature-mattersand-sos-longer.html>

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