

UN launches biodiversity talks on deal to protect nature

March 14 2022



Human destruction of habitats and pollution were already endangering species and now climate change presents a growing threat.

UN biodiversity negotiations began in Geneva on Monday to hammer

out a global deal to better protect nature that is due for approval later this year.

Almost 200 countries are due to adopt a global framework this year to safeguard nature by mid-century from the destruction wrought by humanity, with a key milestone of 30 percent protected by 2030.

"The world is clearly eager for [urgent action](#) to protect nature," said Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, in a press release.

"And we have no time to spare. Together we must ultimately deliver a truly historic agreement that puts us firmly on the path to living in harmony with nature."

Talks, which run from March 14 to 29, will set the stage for a crucial United Nations COP 15 [biodiversity](#) summit, initially due to be held in Kunming, China in 2020 and postponed several times because of the coronavirus pandemic.


The Geneva meeting will announce new dates for COP 15, which is currently slated for April to May but is expected to be delayed again.

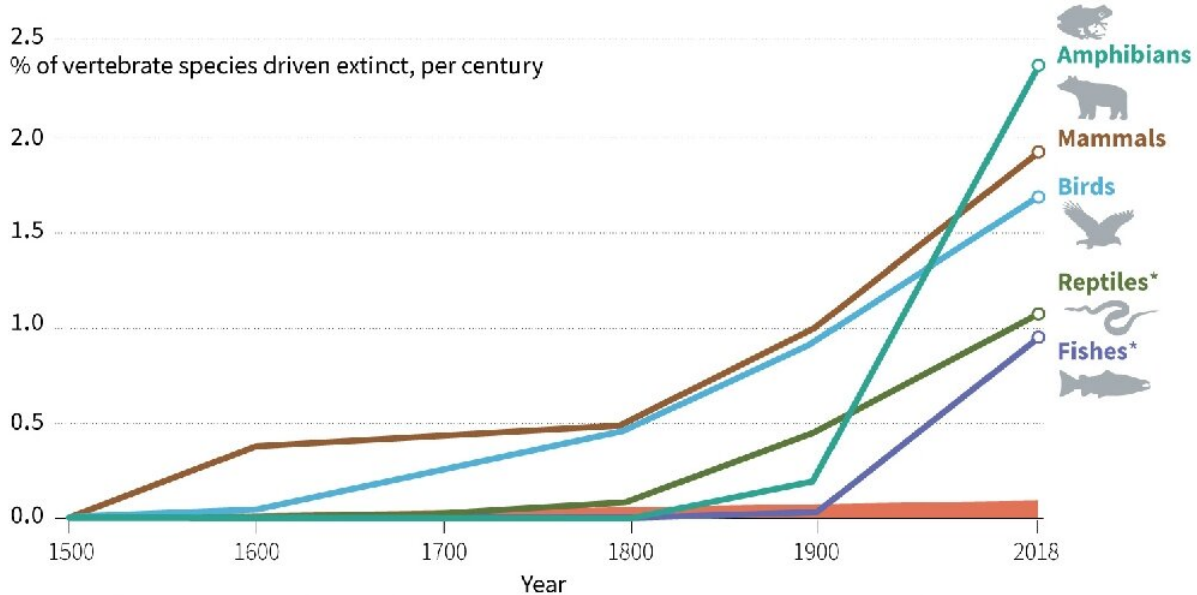
According to several sources, the new dates envisaged are from the end of August to the beginning of September.

The CBD said the Geneva talks will play a crucial role in finalising an "ambitious transformative post-2020 framework" to be approved at COP15.

The 6th mass extinction?

Current rates of extinction are 100 to 1,000 times higher than the background rate

 Estimate of extinction that would occur naturally, 0.1-2 extinctions per million species per year



*Values for reptiles and fishes likely to be underestimates as not all species have been assessed. Fishes includes bony fishes, cartilaginous fishes and lampreys

Source: PBS/IUCN, as available data



Graph showing the percentage of vertebrate groups driven to extinction since 1500.

A draft of the document outlines some 20 targets for 2030, including the high-profile ambition to protect at least 30 percent of the Earth's land and water habitats.

It also includes objectives on reducing the amount of fertilisers and pesticides discharged into the environment and cutting at least \$500 billion per year of harmful subsidies.

In 2019, a report by UN biodiversity experts said one million species could disappear in the coming decades, raising fears the world is

entering a sixth era of mass extinction in the last half-billion years.

Countries have failed to meet almost all the biodiversity targets set in 2010.

And now climate change is a growing threat that could compound all of these problems.

Last month, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warned that nine percent of all the world's species will likely be "at high risk" of extinction even if warming is capped at the ambitious Paris target of 1.5 degrees Celsius.

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