

Greenwashing: A threat to a 'nature positive' world

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Researchers have identified the threat greenwashing poses to a "nature positive" world, one where environmental decline halts and biodiversity outcomes improve. The research is published in [Nature Ecology &](#)

[Evolution.](#)

The concept of nature positive—often seen as the biodiversity version of a "net zero" climate goal—depicts a planet where nature genuinely improves globally, going beyond current efforts that largely focus on mitigating harm.

The University of Queensland's Professor Martine Maron, who led the work, said nature positive is essential to stopping the world's current mass extinction event.

"Countries around the world are starting to back the concept—more than 90 world leaders have signed on to the Leaders' Pledge for Nature calling for a nature positive future by 2030. And 11 of the global Fortune 100 companies already aspire to contribute to nature positive.

"This is fantastic news, but these laudable ambitions mustn't be sidelined by a well-known enemy of the environmental movement: greenwash."

Greenwash refers to misleading or deceptive publicity disseminated by an organization to present an environmentally responsible public image.

Professor E.J. Milner-Gulland from the University of Oxford said they hope the public don't get the proverbial wool pulled over their eyes.

"Our message to the public is that it's incredibly important to scrutinize these claims," Professor Milner-Gulland said.

"As with the term 'net zero,' you'll soon start to see the businesses you buy from, and the governments you vote for, making claims that they are being, doing, or contributing to nature positive. But to be clear, such an achievement is only possible if we fundamentally change how we run our society and economy.

"What we really need are standards, so that it's clear what constitutes misleading information, and transparency, so that consumers and voters can tell the greenwash from the genuine efforts for change."

Australia is currently framing its national environmental law reforms around the concept of nature positive.

"For these initiatives to truly achieve that goal, they'll need to be substantial and far-reaching, preventing the accumulation of further impacts, especially on our threatened biodiversity," Professor Maron said.

"Hundreds of thousands of hectares of habitat are still being cleared in Australia every year, so we still have a long way to go before we can say we're nature positive."

More information: Nature positive must incorporate, not undermine, the mitigation hierarchy, *Nature Ecology & Evolution* (2023). [DOI: 10.1038/s41559-023-02199-2](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-023-02199-2).
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