

Nearly half of the world's migratory species are in decline, UN report says

February 12 2024, by Christina Larson



An elephant head wall trophy is on display at the Nesbitt Castle in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, in this April 23, 2018 file photo. Nearly half of the world's migratory species are in decline, according to a new United Nations report released Monday, Feb. 12, 2024. Many songbirds, sea turtles, whales, sharks and migratory animals move to different environments with changing seasons and are imperiled by habitat loss, illegal hunting and fishing, pollution and climate change. Credit: AP Photo/Jerome Delay, File

Nearly half of the world's migratory species are in decline, according to a new United Nations [report](#) released Monday.

Many songbirds, sea turtles, [whales](#), sharks and other migratory animals move to different environments with changing seasons and are imperiled by habitat loss, illegal hunting and fishing, pollution and climate change.

About 44% of migratory species worldwide are declining in population, [the report found](#). More than a fifth of the nearly 1,200 species monitored by the U.N. are threatened with extinction.

"These are species that move around the globe. They move to feed and breed and also need stopover sites along the way," said Kelly Malsch, lead author of the report released at a [U.N. wildlife conference](#) in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

Habitat loss or other threats at any point in their journey can lead to dwindling populations.

"Migration is essential for some species. If you cut the migration, you're going to kill the species," said Duke University ecologist Stuart Pimm, who was not involved in the report.

The report relied on existing data, including information from the International Union for Conservation of Nature's [Red List](#), which tracks whether a species is endangered.



This Wednesday, March 6, 2019 photo provided by the NOAA Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary shows an entangled subadult humpback whale that was freed of gear by a team of trained responders off Makena Beach, Hawaii. Nearly half of the world's migratory species are in decline, according to a new United Nations report released Monday, Feb. 12, 2024. Many songbirds, sea turtles, whales, sharks and migratory animals move to different environments with changing seasons and are imperiled by habitat loss, illegal hunting and fishing, pollution and climate change. Credit: Ed Lyman/NOAA Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary via AP, File

Participants of the U.N. meeting plan to evaluate proposals for conservation measures and also whether to formally list several new species of concern.

"One country alone cannot save any of these species," said Susan Lieberman, vice president for international policy at the nonprofit Wildlife Conservation Society.

At the meeting, eight governments from South America are expected to jointly propose adding two species of declining Amazon catfish to the U.N. treaty's list of migratory species of concern, she said.



A researcher uses a clothes hanger to secure a geo-locator in place on the leg of a Red Knot shore bird while the glue dries on the north end of Nauset Beach in Eastham, Mass., Tuesday, Sept. 17, 2013. Nearly half of the world's migratory species are in decline, according to a new United Nations report released Monday, Feb. 12, 2024. Many songbirds, sea turtles, whales, sharks and migratory animals move to different environments with changing seasons and are imperiled by habitat loss, illegal hunting and fishing, pollution and climate change. Credit: AP Photo/Stephan Savoia, File



A volunteer carries a Green Sea Turtle after it was caught temporarily at a feeding site on Itaipu Beach in Niteroi, Brazil, Wednesday, May 24, 2023. Nearly half of the world's migratory species are in decline, according to a new United Nations report released Monday, Feb. 12, 2024. Many songbirds, sea turtles, whales, sharks and migratory animals move to different environments with changing seasons and are imperiled by habitat loss, illegal hunting and fishing, pollution and climate change. Credit: AP Photo/Silvia Izquierdo, File

The Amazon River basin is the world's largest freshwater system. "If the Amazon is intact, the catfish will thrive—it's about protecting the habitat," Lieberman said.

In 2022, governments pledged to protect 30% of the planet's land and water resources for conservation at the U.N. Biodiversity Conference in Montreal, Canada.

© 2024 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

Citation: Nearly half of the world's migratory species are in decline, UN report says (2024, February 12) retrieved 26 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2024-02-world-migratory-species-decline.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.