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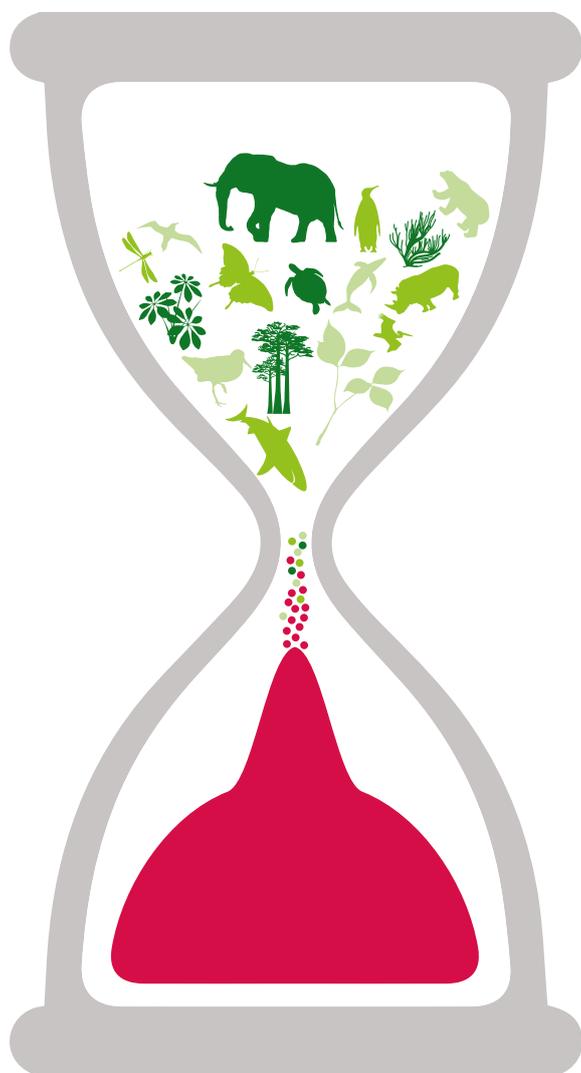
2018

Living Planet Report 2018

A NEW GLOBAL DEAL FOR NATURE

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Published by WWF every two years since 1998, the Living Planet Report (LPR) is the world's leading science-based analysis on the health of our planet and the impact of human activity on global biodiversity. In this landmark anniversary edition, 20 years after its original publication, the LPR 2018 highlights the crucial need for a growing collective voice if we are to reverse the trend of biodiversity loss. WWF, in collaboration with over 50 experts from academia, policy, international development and conservation organizations who have contributed to this edition, are advocating the need for a new global deal for nature and people that addresses the crucial questions of how to feed a growing global population, limit warming to well below 2°C, and restore nature.



THE NEED TO VALUE NATURE

Nature, underpinned by biodiversity, provides us a wealth of services that form the building blocks of modern society. **However, according to the Living Planet Report, we are living through the Great Acceleration – a unique event in the 4.5 billion-year history of our planet – with exploding human population and economic growth driving unprecedented planetary change through the increased demand for energy, land and water.** This is so great that many scientists believe we are entering a new geological epoch, the Anthropocene. Some of these changes have been positive, some negative, and all of them are interconnected. What is increasingly clear is that economic development and human wellbeing are reliant on healthy natural systems, and we cannot continue to enjoy the former without the latter. **According to the LPR 2018, nature provides us with economic services and benefits worth 125 Trillion USD every year.**

Yet, both nature and biodiversity are disappearing at an alarming rate. **The Living Planet Index (LPI) shows that populations of fish, birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles have fallen by an average of 60% in less than 50 years (1970 – 2014). The Freshwater Living Planet Index records an 83% decline in freshwater species, equivalent to 4% per year since 1970.** The most significant decline has been seen in tropical rainforests and in rivers, lakes and wetlands around the world.

DRIVERS OF THIS DECLINE

The report has found two key drivers of declining biodiversity: **over exploitation of resources and agriculture**. Of all the plant, amphibian, reptile, bird and mammal species that have gone extinct since AD 1500, **75% were harmed by overexploitation or agricultural activity or both**. The other major threats are invasive species, pollution and climate change.



Habitat loss and degradation



Overexploitation



Pollution

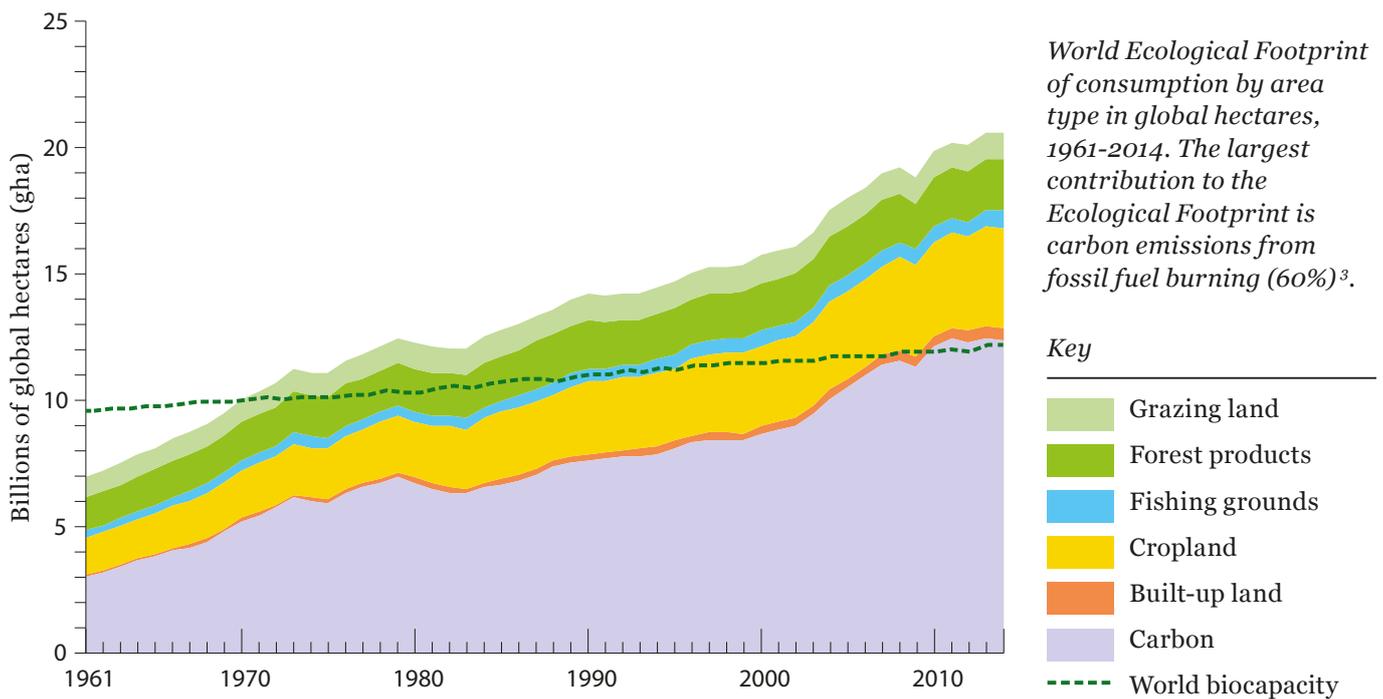


Invasive species and diseases



Climate change

SPIRALING HUMAN CONSUMPTION



This continuous loss of biodiversity can be attributed to our ever-increasing consumption and the resulting increased demand for energy, land and water. **Over the past 50 years, the global ecological footprint (one measure of our consumption of natural resources) has increased by over 190%.**

While the Living Planet Index suggests that India's ecological footprint per person is lesser than 1.75 global hectares/person (which is the lowest bracket and is smaller than that of many large countries), it's high populations levels make it likely for the country to face a widening ecological deficit even if current per-capita levels of resource consumption remain the same. ^{**According to a report released by Global Footprint Network and CII (Confederation of Indian Industry), India demands the biocapacity of two Indias now to provide for its consumption and absorb its wastes.¹}



Today, **90 per cent of the world's seabirds are estimated to have fragments of plastic in their stomach;** in 1960 it was 5 per cent.



Rainforests are shrinking: almost 20 per cent of the Amazon has disappeared in just 50 years.



In the last 50 years, **global average temperature has risen at 170 times the background rate.**



In the 20th century, **freshwater fish have had the highest extinction rate** worldwide among vertebrates.

WHAT'S AT STAKE

a. The land that is our home:

Land degradation (including forest loss) seriously impacts 75% of terrestrial ecosystems, reducing the welfare of more than 3 billion people. Only a quarter of land on Earth is substantively free of the impacts of human activities. This is projected to decline to just one tenth by 2050. The degree of forest decline is also a major threat to biodiversity conservation.

**India has a geographic area of 328.72 million hectare, of which land degradation is estimated to be 96.4 million hectare, or 29.32% of land area - according to the 2016 study by Space Applications Centre of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)². According to the Forest Survey of India in 2017, India currently has only 21.54% forest cover.³

b. The food we eat:

More than 75% of global food crops benefit from pollination. Economically, pollination increases the global value of crop production by US\$235-577 billion per year to growers and keeps prices down for consumers by ensuring stable supplies. However, pollinator loss is a key threat to global food security, with changing land use due to agricultural intensification and urban expansion.

**According to the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, 150 million bee colonies are needed to meet the pollination requirement of around 50 million hectares of agricultural land in India but there are only 1.2 million colonies present.⁴

In a recent submission to a parliamentary committee, the Agriculture Ministry in India highlighted that the productivity decrease of major crops could rise to as much as 10-40% by 2100 unless farming adapts to climate change-induced changes in weather.⁵

c. Our oceans:

The LPR indicates that almost 6 billion tonnes of fish and invertebrates have been taken from the world's oceans since 1950. Coral reefs, that support more than a quarter of marine life, have reduced by about 50% in shallow waters in the last 30 years. If current trends continue, up to 90% of the world's coral reefs might be gone by mid-century.

**In India, our marine capture production increased by an average of 11.9% from 2005 to 2014 and saw a 2.9% increase from 2015 to 2016, according to The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture Report released by the FAO.⁶

**A study by the Oceans and Coasts Program of the Nature Conservation Foundation's has found that the coral cover in the Lakshadweep islands has reduced from 51.6% in 1998 to 11% in 2017, a staggering 40% decline. A major driver of this is climate change related disturbance.⁷

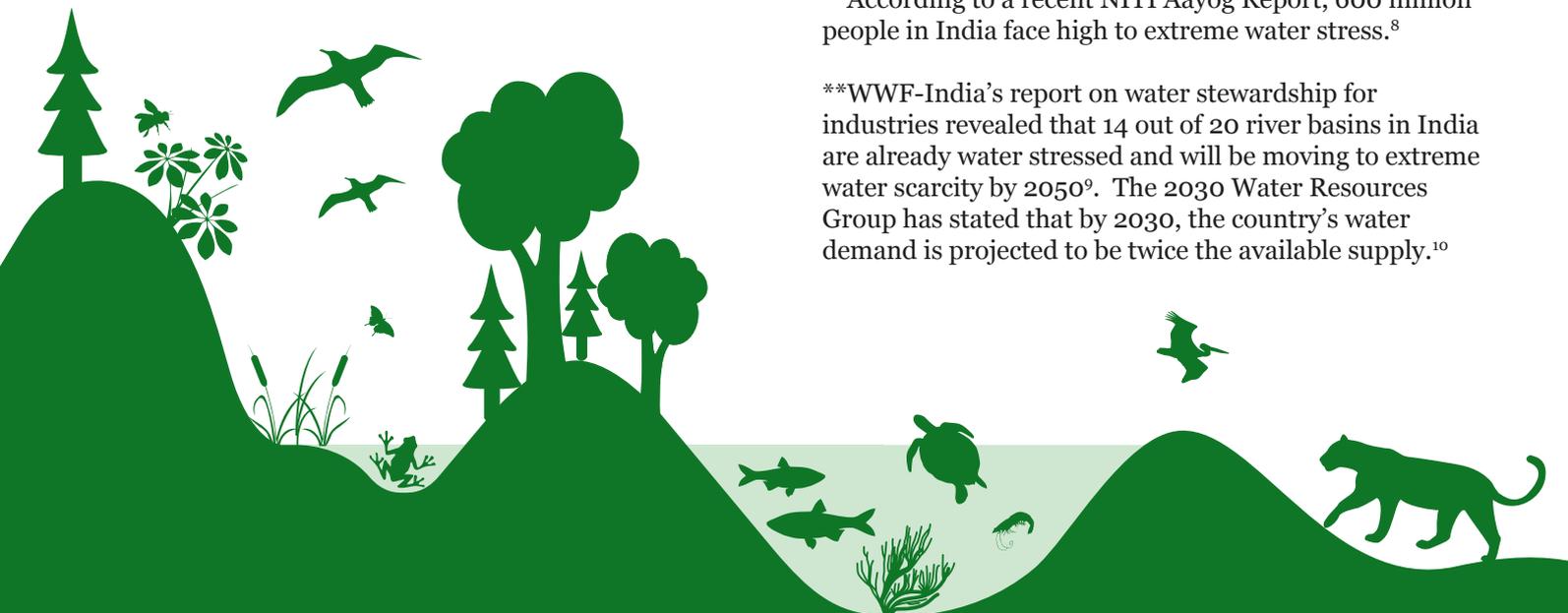
d. Our rivers, lakes and wetlands:

Lakes, rivers and wetlands are the source of life for all humans yet they are also the most threatened, strongly affected by a range of factors including habitat modification, fragmentation and destruction; invasive species; overfishing; pollution; disease; and climate change. Freshwater ecosystems are also impacted by increasing withdrawal and consumption of surface water for a variety of uses but dominated by agriculture, which is responsible for approximately 70% of total consumption.

Globally, wetland extent is estimated to have declined by 87% in the modern era. The Freshwater Living Planet Index also shows an 83% decline in freshwater biodiversity since 1970 – equivalent to 4% every year! Populations of the critically endangered gharial across its range in India and Nepal declined by approximately 58% between 1997 and 2006.

**According to a recent NITI Aayog Report, 600 million people in India face high to extreme water stress.⁸

**WWF-India's report on water stewardship for industries revealed that 14 out of 20 river basins in India are already water stressed and will be moving to extreme water scarcity by 2050⁹. The 2030 Water Resources Group has stated that by 2030, the country's water demand is projected to be twice the available supply.¹⁰



THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW!

BENDING THE CURVE TOWARDS A FUTURE WE WANT



Despite numerous international studies and agreements confirming that the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity is a global priority, worldwide trends in biodiversity continue to decline. What we need to change this is bold and well-defined goals and a credible actions.

Globally, WWF is taking the window of opportunity between now to 2020 (when the Aichi Targets under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Environmental Goals of the 2030 Agenda culminate and a new comprehensive framework for the future is set) to shape a positive vision. WWF is collaborating with a consortium of almost 40 universities, conservation organizations and intergovernmental organizations to launch the research initiative: “Bending the Curve of Biodiversity Loss”.

It is time we rethink how we value nature – culturally, economically and on our political agendas. As the world looks toward the promise of 2020, a year that will see global leaders coming together on climate, biodiversity and sustainable development, governments, communities, citizens, businesses and organizations must come together to deliver a comprehensive framework agreement for nature and people under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The CBD is the only international legal instrument that explicitly seeks to protect the natural wealth of the planet. Together, we must mobilize public and private actors to show greater action and ambition to reverse the devastating trend of biodiversity loss. This may be our only chance to shape the future - **GIVEUP to Give Back to the Planet!**

References:

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- ⁷ Yadav S, Alcoverro T, Arthur R (2018), Coral reefs respond to repeated ENSO events with increasing resistance but reduced recovery capacities in the Lakshadweep archipelago, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00338-018-1735-5>
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**** Data marked is NOT from the Living Planet Report. All data has been attributed to required sources.**



Working to sustain the natural world for people and wildlife

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For more information and to download the full Living Planet Report 2018, please visit <https://wwfindia.org/lpr>

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