



Conservation Highlights

May 2014

Recent achievements and challenges in
WWF's work to protect biodiversity and reduce humanity's footprint in
priority areas of the global conservation programme

WWF's Earth Hour started in Sydney in 2007 as a citizen action to protest against climate change and a call for urgent action. Since then Earth Hour has grown at a huge pace to become the world's largest mass participation environmental initiative, active in over 150 countries, and has gone 'beyond the hour' to become a platform where people are mobilising action on local, regional and global environmental priorities.

Earth Hour 2014 Event

Earth Hour set new records for global participation across the planet in March 2014, with 162 countries and territories and 7,000 cities celebrating the event. This year saw the launch of Earth Hour Blue which aims to go beyond the hour with crowdsourcing and crowdfunding initiatives, enabling people to use their voice or their money to support WWF projects.

This year, Earth Hour enlisted the help of Spider-Man to inspire global participants to become Superheroes for the planet. The director, producers and cast of the new film *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* attended WWF's global flagship event in Singapore to help switch off the lights on the Marina Bay Skyline.



Find out more: [!\[\]\(de95854c7ee024cfadc48187bbb781b2_img.jpg\)](#)

Cape Town awarded Earth Hour Capital 2014

WWF's Earth Hour City Challenge recognized Cape Town as the Global Earth Hour Capital 2014. The South African city took bold steps to move away from fossil fuels towards renewable energy with a solar water heating programme and stands out as a role model for the global South with green actions other cities can replicate. Over 160 cities from 14 countries joined the competition, which looked at each city's ambition and innovation for low carbon development in the local context. The cities joined in support of WWF's Seize Your Power pledge calling for a shift of investments away from fossil fuels. Over 300,000 people around the world voiced their support for renewable energy in the 160 finalist cities through the social media platform *We Love Cities*.



Find out more: [!\[\]\(6a9b39b98eb945faa14c645ec99e4eaa_img.jpg\)](#)

Earth Hour 2014 launches crowdsourcing

The idea of mobilizing the voices of the Earth Hour audience in support of environmental actions around the globe took off with Earth Hour 2014, and WWF crowdsourcing projects were launched across the globe, starting in the Pacific as Earth Hour swept the world. Here are some examples:

- In China Earth Hour took the theme “Blue Sky” on the need to stop pollution and smog, using a photo-based phone app. Sony Pictures committed to offset 4,000 tonnes of carbon via WWF’s Gold Standard energy efficient stoves to reduce pressure on forests and protect the giant panda;
- A youth-led drive by Earth Hour Champions Team kicked off across 31 cities in Indonesia. Social media documented energy saving, reduced plastic use, tree planting and use of public transport;
- The #maketheswitch Earth Hour message in the UAE reached more than 5 million people, urging a switch to energy efficient lighting – a survey showed 84 per cent of people positive to make the switch;
- For the third year running, more than 100,000 people in Russia joined an Earth Hour environmental petition, in 2014 calling for increased protection for five threatened species including the Far Eastern leopard. Previous petitions have successfully gained increased marine protection and called for huge areas of forest to be sustainably managed;
- Over 2,000 energy-efficient stoves were distributed in Madagascar, to reduce pressure on forests, and a crowdfunding project on the Earth Hour site raised funds for a further 500 stoves;
- In Finland, 20,000 people signed a solar pledge calling for a fair subsidy policy for solar power. The #EarthHourSuomi was the most tweeted hashtag in the country helping drive the pledge;
- A petition against the proposed Ptolemaida V coal-fired power station in Greece gained 12,000 signatures, and will be delivered to the government and KfW, the financing bank and sole investor;
- A major hotel pledged to plant 40 hectares of trees in Uganda’s Earth Hour forest, and the “adopt-a-village” scheme aims to link tree planting with clean energy technologies in vulnerable communities;
- The Earth Hour event in Lima, Peru was a practice for the climate change conference to be held in this city later this year;
- In the week leading up to Earth Hour, volunteers helped clean up five Chilean beaches as a pilot for a National Coastal Cleanup Day in March every year;
- Colombia’s Medellin city received the people’s award in the Earth Hour City Challenge through the social media campaign *We Love Cities*;
- Earth Hour celebrations in Argentina supported a proposed law that aims to install energy-efficient water heaters saving gas equivalent to powering 800,000 homes for a year.

Find out more: 



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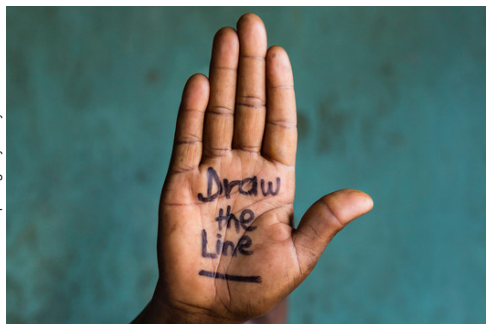
WWF has run many campaigns over the course of its 53 years to focus attention on key issues and seek solutions. WWF has now launched a series of global campaigns to deal with critical and urgent environmental problems and threats. The first campaign targeted the illegal wildlife trade, and has been followed by a campaign to shift investments away from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources. And an emergency campaign has been kicked off to address the threat of oil drilling in Africa's prized Virunga National Park.

WWF's emergency campaign aims to save Virunga, Africa's oldest national park, from oil drilling and possible de-gazettement. One of the most biodiverse places on Earth, Virunga is also a vital resource for local residents. Despite decades of unrest, the park generates US\$48 million annually to support local livelihoods, and is a source of fish protein and freshwater for tens of thousands of people. But this iconic place is under threat from oil exploration. Some lines should not be crossed, and drilling in Virunga is one of these.

OECD decision against Soco

Allegations of human rights violations and breaching of environmental protection by UK oil exploration company Soco International PLC relating to its work in Virunga, a World Heritage Site in Central Africa, are being investigated by an Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) agency. Announced in February, this follows a complaint from WWF that Soco has breached OECD global corporate responsibility standards. Alleged violations include intimidation, threats and unlawful detention of local activists, and withholding information on environmental risk from communities likely to be impacted by Soco's activities. The OECD's guidelines complaint mechanism is a transparent process to hold multinational corporations accountable.

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Opposition increases to Soco's oil plans

Local protests have taken place in Goma in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), against Soco's plans to start seismic testing for oil in the Virunga National Park. At a peaceful demonstration in March activists voiced the concerns of the community that exploration will damage or destroy their livelihoods, and could reignite civil conflict in an area only recently at peace.

The UK Government announced in October it is opposed to Soco's activities in Virunga, noting this is a World Heritage Site "in danger".

More than 675,000 people have joined WWF's petition to demand that Virunga be protected from the damaging impacts of oil.

© Edgar Mbekejoja



Find out more: 

World Heritage Sites now 'no-go' for Total

The French oil giant Total has confirmed it will not explore for oil and gas in World Heritage Sites. This was announced in February by the United Nations agency in charge of World Heritage Sites, noting that oil, gas and mining increasingly threaten these sites. This is a major success for WWF which has campaigned against Total seeking a firm pledge by the company that it will remain out of World Heritage Sites. Total's decision follows an earlier pledge to remain out of the Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Africa's oldest and most biodiverse protected area.

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Find out more: 

WWF's campaign to promote clean, renewable energy – Seize Your Power – aims to mobilise key organisations investing in new energy sources to shift US\$40 billion away from investments in fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas, into the development of clean renewable energy sources. Such a shift of investment is urgent and crucial to more rapidly move the world towards climate-safe energy.

EBRD commits to step out of coal

WWF welcomed the decision by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) to phase out funding of coal-fired power stations, but noted this must be implemented effectively. The EBRD decision, announced in November, is the latest in an unprecedented wave of commitments from international development finance organisations to move away from coal-based energy projects, given their disastrous impacts on climate and health. WWF also welcomed the EBRD's other improvements in energy policy including energy saving and adherence to the International Hydropower Association's sustainability guidelines. WWF called on other development finance organisations to follow the EBRD lead.



© WWF-Canon / Mauri Rautkari

Growing support for a shift from coal to renewables

A major UN scientific report calls for a more than tripling of investments in clean energy solutions as the main measure to mitigate climate change. The April report, agreed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, finds that investment in sustainable low-carbon energy sources will have limited economic impact compared to the very significant costs of inaction.

The list of major public finance bodies and governments which have committed to shift away from coal-based energy continues to grow and now includes the World Bank, European Investment Bank, UK and French development agencies, the US Export Credit Agency, and the governments of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, UK and US.



© Kevin Schafer / WWF-Canon

As apex predators, sharks are crucially important to the health of the world's oceans, but are being wiped out on a massive scale – an estimated 100 million killed annually, mostly for shark fin soup, an Asian delicacy. Sharks also breed slowly. WWF offices in the Asia-Pacific region are campaigning to get their countries to stop importing, selling and consuming shark fin.

“WWF’s Year of the Tiger campaign in 2010 was central to mobilizing the global effort to save the tiger. With many partners, we helped shape the global strategy to double tiger numbers. And in the tiger range states, we worked with governments and others to create the national plans that underpin it.”

Jim Leape
former WWF International Director General

Progress on addressing the shark slaughter

Two key international shark fin importing hubs, Hong Kong and Singapore, report reduced demand for shark fin following extensive public campaigns against the unsustainable killing of sharks. Hong Kong reported a one-third drop in shark fin imports in 2013 compared to 2012. In Singapore domestic sale of shark fin to hotels and restaurants also fell by one-third, and prices fell by a similar percentage.

New Zealand has joined around 100 countries and states including Australia, the EU and US, to ban shark finning, but it will be three years before the ban comes into effect, meaning thousands of blue sharks – the sharks most often caught – may be killed before the law is in place.



© NC Turner / WWF-Canon

Find out more: 

DiCaprio funds help Nepal’s tiger numbers double

The Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation has donated US\$3 million for WWF to help double Nepal’s wild tiger population by 2022 – the 2010 Global Tiger Summit agreed to double tiger numbers across all tiger range states by the next Chinese Year of the Tiger in 2022. WWF works with Nepal authorities and local communities in the Terai Arc landscape to strengthen anti-poaching patrols, protect breeding areas, and develop income-generating activities for local people, including compensation for livestock lost to tigers. DiCaprio has supported WWF’s tiger work since 2010, which has helped grow one Terai Arc population from an estimated 18 to 50 tigers. Habitat destruction and poaching are the main threats to the estimated 3,200 remaining tigers in the wild.



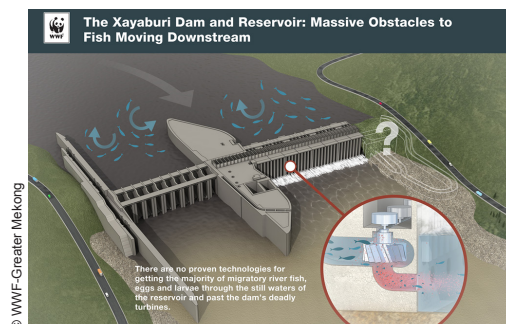
© Tom Munro/JBG Photo

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Development threats to Great Barrier Reef and Mekong

A legal challenge has been launched in Australia to stop the dumping in the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) of three million cubic metres of material excavated for development of a megaport for coal exports. The North Queensland Conservation Council, supported by WWF, challenges the dumping which is also opposed by tourism operators: tourism in the GBR generates US\$5 billion annually.

A declaration opposing construction of the Xayaburi Dam in Laos on the main Mekong River has been issued by a consortium representing 39 NGOs and civil society groups including WWF. There are fears that the dam may threaten the huge Mekong fishing industry which supports 60 million people in the region and affect their food security.



Find out more:   

Victories in Europe against destructive development

A 22-year battle to save the Acheloos River in Greece from a massive water diversion scheme has been won with a decision by the country's supreme administrative court upholding the objections of WWF and a coalition of NGOs and municipal authorities against the diversion.

Croatia has stopped a proposed scheme that would have canalized a 53 km section of the Danube River along the Croatia-Serbia border, and destroyed key natural sites including a renowned bird paradise.

A WWF campaign against construction of small hydropower in important rivers in Rumania has gained success with a government commitment to develop a hydropower policy in line with EU standards.




Find out more: 

Donaña at 50 – a paradise still threatened

Spain's Coto Doñana is one of Europe's most valuable wetlands; a sanctuary for millions of migratory birds, including many endangered species. Plans to dry out Doñana caught WWF's attention in its early days and especially Dr Luc Hoffmann – a founder of WWF and a principal architect of the Ramsar Convention to protect the world's priority wetlands. WWF's purchase of the land in 1963 helped set the organization on the path to protect priority places and species around the world. In this 50th anniversary of the first steps to protect Doñana, WWF works with local groups to confront new threats such as illegal wells drying out the wetland. WWF remains committed to ensure Doñana remains a vital stopover for migratory birds well into the future.



Find out more:  

WWF's biodiversity meta-goal is to ensure the integrity of the most outstanding natural places on Earth. This includes the protection of biodiversity in high conservation priority areas, and restoring populations of those species with the highest ecological, economic and cultural value.

WWF recognizes community conservation in Namibia

WWF has recognised Namibia's communal conservancy programme as a Gift to the Earth – an award for globally significant conservation achievement – profiling the groundbreaking conservation action and responsible tourism that has helped wildlife recover with major benefits for rural communities. At an international travel summit in October in Windhoek, former WWF International President Chief Anyaoku congratulated Namibia President Pohamba on the programme. This has enabled local communities to establish 79 conservancies covering 16 million hectares to manage their natural resources and wildlife. These conservancies bring half of Namibia under conservation management and involve one in ten Namibians. The model is being replicated in other countries.



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Community support vital to secure endangered species

The three countries home to the mountain gorilla, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, agreed to protect gorilla habitat spanning their shared borders and to maximise the value of tourism for local communities. A meeting of the countries' national park authorities in April recognised the importance of gorilla-based tourism for income to local communities, and the support of these communities is essential to maintain the increasing numbers of mountain gorillas.

The population of saiga antelope in Mongolia has increased from 3,000 in 1998 to 10,000 in 2013, and expanded into regions where the species was wiped out decades ago. Anti-poaching and cooperation with local herders have proven effective.



© Martin Harvey / WWF-Canon

Find out more: 


Regional conservation agreed in Europe and Arctic

Eight south-east Europe countries, from Albania in the south to Slovenia in the north, have committed to regional cooperation on conservation and sustainable development, and to increase protected area by 13 per cent including two new national parks and three marine protected areas. The countries have agreed to include nature conservation goals in national development plans and boost nature-based tourism.

The five polar bear range state countries committed to ensure the future of this species as climate change hugely threatens its ice habitat. In Moscow in December at an international forum, Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia and US agreed to implement a circumpolar action plan for polar bear conservation.



© WWF / David Jenkins

Find out more: 

Governments commit to action on poaching crisis

Forty-six countries made a commitment to take “decisive and urgent action” at the London Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade in February. The London Declaration aims to strengthen enforcement, reduce consumer demand and support sustainable livelihoods for communities living alongside wildlife. Trafficking devastates species populations, but also endangers rangers, impedes economic development and destabilises society by driving corruption and criminal networks.

WWF’s campaign to halt the illegal wildlife trade, with the wildlife trade monitoring organisation TRAFFIC, gained success with the European Parliament decision to adopt a European Union (EU) resolution on Illegal Wildlife Crime.



Find out more: 

Slaughter of South African rhino continues

In 2013 poachers killed 1004 rhinos in South Africa – 606 in the Kruger National Park alone. This is a sharp increase from 668 lost in 2012 and, following many years of conservation success in rebuilding rhino numbers, risks driving rhinos into serious decline. In South Africa, home to about 80 per cent of Africa’s rhinos, poaching also threatens national security. The horn is smuggled to Asia, primarily Viet Nam, for use in traditional medicine. South Africa is working with key countries involved in the smuggling and demand including Mozambique (a key transit route), Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, Thailand, and Viet Nam to counter the illegal trade. The aim is to halt the smuggling with increased effort and sentences and reduce demand.



Find out more: 

Nepal celebrates a year of zero poaching

WWF honoured the work of nine organizations in Nepal with the WWF Leaders for a Living Planet award for having achieved zero poaching of elephant, rhino and tiger for 12 months. The organizations recognised include Chitwan and Bardia National Parks and their Buffer Zone Management Committees, two Nepal Army battalions and a company, the Central Investigation Bureau of Nepal Police, and Nepal’s National Trust for Nature Conservation. With huge poaching of these species in other parts of the world, Nepal shows that with determination, poaching can be stopped, wildlife crime curbed, and tourism can benefit. This is the second time Nepal has achieved zero poaching over a 12-month period.



Find out more:  

Bolivia takes leadership on freshwater conservation

Bolivia has designated as a Ramsar site the 6.9 million-hectare Llanos de Moxos wetland in northern Bolivia which also provides the headwaters for the WWF priority Madeira River – the major southern tributary of the Amazon River. At an event in La Paz in February with Bolivia's ministers of Foreign Affairs and Environment, WWF recognized this globally significant conservation commitment as a Gift to the Earth, WWF's most prestigious award. In total, Bolivia has taken the world lead in designating almost 15 million hectares of wetlands under the Ramsar Convention. WWF said this demonstrates the government's support for freshwater conservation – and contributes significantly to the conservation of the wider Amazon basin.



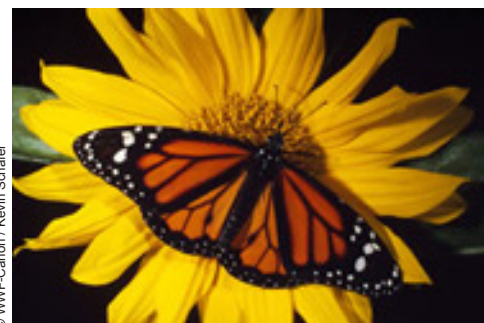
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Gray whales and monarch butterflies in Mexico

For four consecutive years, numbers of migratory gray whales are up in the main coastal lagoons of Mexico's Baja California. Researchers in one lagoon counted 2017 individuals in February compared to 1178 in 2013 – a 44 per cent increase. Gray whales congregate in the lagoons during the winter breeding season.

Celebrating WWF's five years partnership with the Carlos Slim Foundation, successes include protection of 300,000 hectares (ha) of priority areas, better management of a further million ha, and reduced logging in the core zone of the monarch butterfly reserve. WWF called for habitat protection along the butterfly migration route across Mexico, US and Canada to protect this natural wonder.



© WWF-Canon / Kevin Schafer

Blue whale and forest conservation in Chile

Creation by Chile of a major new marine protected area (MPA) helps secure the future of a local population of blue whales – the largest mammal on Earth. Located off Chile's southern coast, the 90,000 hectares Tic-Toc MPA in the Gulf of Corcovado follows 15 years of effort by WWF and other organizations to protect the area from salmon farming and other damaging development. The area is a vital feeding and nursery area for blue whales and several other cetacean species.

Half of Chile's forest plantations are now certified to Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standards with addition of 1,1 million hectares managed by Forestal Arauco, one of the world's largest pulp producers. This includes protection of 200,000 ha of forest.



© naturepl.com / David Fleetham / WWF

Find out more: 

Marine conservation in Colombia

Colombia has created a new coastal protected area to secure important beaches used for nesting by endangered leatherback and hawksbill turtles. Supported by WWF for over a decade, the 26,000 ha Playon Playona Acandí Sanctuary is a collaboration with local community councils.

A cooperative initiative including Colombia's fisheries authorities, the tuna fisheries industry and WWF is working to make the use of fish aggregating devices (FADs) more sustainable. FADs are devices used to attract tuna for catching. Floating or submerged, anchored or drifting, FADs are responsible for significant by-catch, especially of turtles and sharks as well as non-target tuna. The initiative aims to reduce the by-catch.



© Nils Aukan / WWF-Canon

Find out more: 

Towards sustainable beef production in Latin America

Almost one-third of the world's beef is produced in Latin America and demand for increased beef supply is driving deforestation and land conversion in and around many of WWF's priority areas, overgrazing, diversion of water and soil degradation. With WWF's Market Transformation Initiative, WWF offices in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico are supporting implementation of the principles of the Global Roundtable on Sustainable Beef to promote more sustainable cattle ranching practices through improved land-use planning and training, and the development of market-based incentives for sustainable beef production.



© Adriano Gambarini / WWF-Brazil

Find out more: 

Deforestation rates in Brazil surge

After several years of declining deforestation rates, the annual deforestation rate in Brazil has risen 28 percent. Forests are cleared for a variety of reasons including illegal mining and soy production. Environment Minister Izabella Teixeira emphasized the Government's commitment to reverse increased deforestation and eliminate illegal logging in the Amazon. The deforested area is 5,843 square kilometres, with the states of Mato Grosso, Roraima, Maranhão, and Pará leading the surge. Mato Grosso saw the most forest clearing, an increase of 52 percent. Only three states out of 10 in the Brazilian Amazon – Acre, Amapá and Tocantins – registered a drop in deforestation relative to the previous 12 months.



© Brent Striffler / Getty Images / WWF

Find out more: 

Drop in deforestation in Argentina's Atlantic Forest

Deforestation of the WWF priority Atlantic Forest in Argentina's Misiones Province has decreased by 70 per cent since new regulations were enacted in 2010 to stop rampant forest clearance, according to a 2013 report by the National Secretariat of Environment and Sustainable Development. The annual deforestation rate 1989-2004 was 1,13 per cent, more than double the average for Latin America and five times the global average. This resulted in an annual loss of 18,700 hectares. The Native Forest Land Use Zoning law forbids clear-cutting and imposes other restrictions in 1,19 million hectares – 73 per cent of the remaining forest – and as a result the annual loss of forest has fallen to 5,300 hectares.



© WWF-Canon / Michel Gunther

WWF's second meta-goal is to reduce humankind's Ecological Footprint so that we live within the renewable resource limits of our planet. This builds on strong foundations and targets humanity's carbon, commodity and water footprints which have the greatest impact on biodiversity.

WWF develops key water stewardship partnerships

WWF has developed a water stewardship strategy with global fashion company H&M. A year on, the partnership's achievements include water sustainability training of 104,000 H&M employees, mapped water risks for 500 supplier factories, and updated wastewater treatment. The partnership also advocates for better water management plans in vital river basins in China and Bangladesh.

WWF has also announced a 3-year partnership with the Mondi Group, one of the world's largest packaging, pulp and paper producers. The partnership has three stewardship aims in ecosystems, manufacturing and products through protection of high value ecosystems and reducing the water and climate footprint of Mondi's operations.



Find out more: 

Progress towards sustainable fisheries

The European Parliament voted in October for measures to support sustainable fishing, and against proposals which would have continued the destruction of fisheries including subsidies for new boat building. The vote included jobs for young fishermen and funding for data capture and regulation enforcement will give a more complete picture of fish stocks and identify which stocks need more recovery time.

A pilot project initiated by WWF shows the use of satellite technology in surveillance of fishing activities increases safety on fishing vessels and promotes legal and transparent fishing operations – especially to counter illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

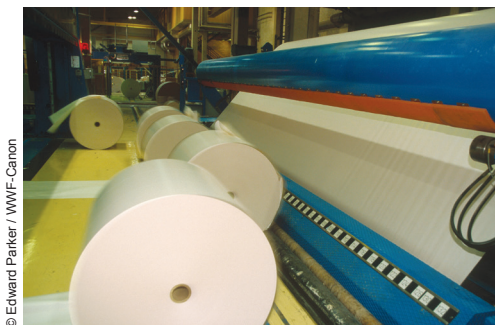


© Adam Osweil / WWF-Greater Mekong


Find out more: 

Leading paper companies embrace transparency

Twenty-five of the world's major pulp and paper manufacturers, with a combined annual output of 85 million tonnes, have embraced transparency by participating in the WWF Environmental Paper Company Index 2013. This is over a third of the 70 companies invited, up from 15 in 2011. They have voluntarily disclosed the footprints of 40 product categories, reporting on targets and performance in impacts on forest ecosystems, emissions and their Environmental Management Systems. The 25 companies between them produce 14 percent of each of the world's tissue, paper & board, and pulp. The paper industry is key to conserving forests in an age of resource scarcity and land-use competition. It needs ambitious goals and maximum transparency to continue the progress of recent decades.



© Edward Parker / WWF-Carlon

Find out more: 

ASC salmon available in key Japanese market

Atlantic salmon from Norway certified by the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) is now available for consumers in Japan, one of the world's largest seafood consumer nations. An estimated 60 per cent of the world's farmed salmon is produced in Norway and Chile and much of this is exported to Japan. Farmed fish now makes up half of all seafood and demand is growing. The ASC was set up by WWF and the Dutch Sustainable Trade Initiative in 2010 to address the threats posed by aquaculture including pollution, disease and escape of farmed fish into the wild. ASC ensures the most robust standards to ensure minimal impacts on the marine environment and on local communities.



© WWF-Canon / Jo Benn

Indonesian paper companies turning over a new leaf?

WWF is calling for continued pressure on Indonesia's pulp and paper industry to ensure recent commitments on responsible forest management and reduction of deforestation are real and ongoing. Rod Taylor, WWF's Global Forest Programme Director, noted recent turnarounds by pulp and paper giants APP and APRIL to stop pulping Indonesia's natural forests, which they have enormously damaged in recent years. He called for independent monitoring through the Environmental Paper Network launched by WWF and other groups, to measure progress against goals such as avoided deforestation and social issues. These companies can restore forest and wetland areas, reduce climate emissions from peat drainage, and compensate communities whose rights have been trampled.



© Eyes on the Forest

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is 20 years old

Twenty years on from its creation in 1994, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) has certified 180 million hectares of forest across 81 countries worldwide as sustainably managed. The FSC was created by governments, industry, labour and NGOs including WWF to mobilize market forces, including consumer choice, in support of responsible forest management that delivers social and environmental benefits.

FSC-certified forests provide more benefits to local communities than uncertified forests, as reported in April by the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), which noted FSC certification in Africa's Congo Basin countries has pushed logging companies towards significant social benefits including schooling.



© N.C. Turner / WWF-Canon

World leaders agree to stop deforestation

In a hugely important conservation milestone, world leaders have agreed a finance package that will provide funds for tropical forest nations which are reducing carbon emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+). Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) agreed the global REDD+ mechanism in November. WWF has supported this effort for many years, engaging both on the ground in the forest nations as well as at global policy and finance levels. REDD+ will fight climate change by addressing the 20 percent of global carbon emissions caused by forest loss - a major victory for the world's tropical forests, the more than 1.6 billion people that depend on forests, and the Earth's embattled climate.



Find out more: 

Denmark recognized for climate leadership

WWF has recognised as a Gift to the Earth the inspiring leadership and example set by Denmark to address climate change with its highly ambitious commitments to reduce carbon emissions, phase out fossil fuels, and switch to renewable energy. Presenting the award – WWF's highest recognition for globally significant conservation achievement – to Danish Prime Minister Ms Thorning-Schmidt in October in Copenhagen at the Global Green Growth Forum, WWF International Director General Jim Leape said Denmark shows it is possible to develop a sustainable society with economic growth and human welfare. Denmark has committed to achieve 100 per cent clean renewable energy by 2050 with coal phased out by 2030, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40 per cent by 2020 compared to 1990 levels.



Find out more: 

IPCC report details clear evidence of climate change

A UN climate impact report prepared by the world's leading scientific authorities in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has given clear evidence that the Earth is in deep trouble, showing that climate change is real and happening now, and is affecting the lives and livelihoods of people worldwide as well as the sensitive ecosystems that sustain life. Released in March, this is the second of four IPCC reports updating scientific understanding of climate change, and focused on the impacts and vulnerability of human and natural systems, future risks and impacts of climate change. The report sets out two clear choices: cut emissions and face challenging and barely manageable risks or do nothing and face a world of devastating risks and impacts.



Find out more: 

Perhaps WWF's greatest strength is its people – the staff and officers who together with our partners strive for a living planet. Similarly, there are many leaders and champions playing key roles outside WWF to achieve conservation success and sustainable development. By highlighting these champions for the environment, WWF recognises their contribution, while profiling conservation success and, above all, showing what can be achieved and inspiring others to take up the challenge to secure a living planet.

Unilever CEO awarded top WWF honour

Paul Polman, CEO of global consumer group Unilever, has been recognised by WWF for his global leadership in making sustainability a key issue within the global retail sector. Awarded the 2013 WWF Duke of Edinburgh Conservation Medal at a function in Geneva in November, Polman said “Unilever and WWF have a long history of working together on transformational projects and I have been proud to build on that relationship during my time as CEO”. Under his leadership, Polman took the lead to reduce Unilever's environmental impact and he has demonstrated that corporate leaders can be part of the solution to environmental challenges. This is the first time the medal, awarded annually since 1970, has gone to the sitting CEO of a major multinational.



© WWF / Jay Louvion Studio Casagrande

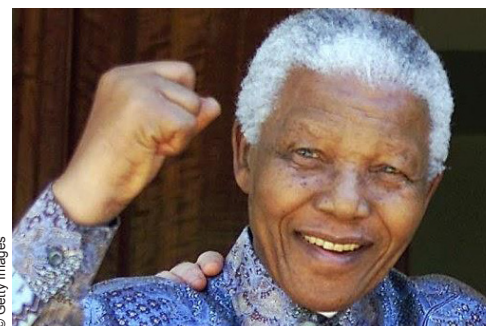
Find out more: 

Inspirational environmental leaders recognized

Nina Jensen, CEO of WWF- Norway has been recognised as one of 200 young global leaders 2014 by the World Economic Forum in March in tribute to her community involvement and potential to shape the future through inspired leadership.

The Russian Government recognized Dr Yury Darman, head of WWF-Russia's Amur office, as a “Distinguished Ecologist of the Russian Federation”.

WWF paid tribute to the former South African President Nelson Mandela on his death in December. Mandela was awarded WWF's Gift to the Earth award in 1998 for the creation of Table Mountain National Park, a protected area at the centre of the WWF priority fynbos ecoregion.



© Getty Images

Find out more: 

New Director General for WWF International

WWF announced the appointment of Dr Marco Lambertini as Director General of WWF International. With 25 years of global conservation leadership, Marco began his association with WWF as a youth volunteer growing up in Italy. Most recently he was Chief Executive of BirdLife International, the world's largest partnership of national nature conservation civil society organizations in 120 countries with 3-million members.

Marco Lambertini officiated at the opening of the new WWF office in Seoul, capital of the Republic of Korea in March. WWF-Korea will focus on footprint issues such as climate change, renewable energy, and sustainable fisheries.



© Gemma Parkes / WWF

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WWF highlights in numbers

79

A total of 79 community-managed conservancies covering over 16 million hectares have been established since 1994 in Namibia, helping wildlife recover and benefitting one in ten Namibians

7,000

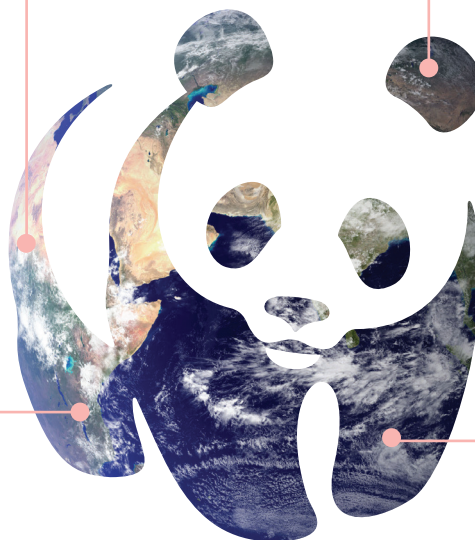
More than 7,000 towns and cities in 162 countries celebrated WWF's Earth Hour on 29 March 2014

6.9M HECTARES

Bolivia's 6.9 million hectares Llanos de Moxos wetland complex is the world's largest to be recognised as a Ramsar wetland of international importance, and provides the headwaters of the Madeira river, the major southern tributary of the Amazon River

20 YEARS

Established 20 years ago to certify sustainably-managed forests and give consumers a responsible choice, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) has now certified 180 million hectares – an area twice the size of Venezuela



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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