



Conservation Highlights

October 2013

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 has run many campaigns over the course of its 52 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 new global campaign: Seize Your Power

WWF's new 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.



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Find out more:  

WWF seeks investment switch to renewable energy

On 5 June World Environment Day WWF launched the Seize Your Power campaign with the aim to achieve a major shift in investments in energy generation away from fossil fuels to sustainable renewable sources. An online petition enabling people worldwide to call for a shift in investment to clean renewable energy has gained 45,000 signatures. The campaign is running in more than 20 countries where the targets include public finance bodies, pension funds and sovereign wealth funds.

In Colombia, WWF International President Yolanda Kakabadse presented the campaign at a meeting of the Inter-American bank with Colombia President Juan Manuel Santos and several energy and environment ministers from the region.



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Big investors dumping coal as a power source

The World Bank and European Investment Bank both announced in July a shift in their energy investments away from coal-fired power plants. Coal is a dirty fossil fuel power source, polluting local environments, damaging health and contributing to climate change. WWF has called on both organisations to completely phase out investments in fossil fuels and switch to renewables, and for the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to do similar.

Five Nordic countries have committed to stop public financing for new coal-fired power stations overseas. The announcement in September by Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden adds to a growing movement by investors away from coal-fired energy.



© Tanja Petersen

Find out more: 

WWF has launched an emergency campaign 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.

French oil giant Total to stay out of Virunga

In response to an open letter from WWF to its investors, the oil company Total has committed to not explore for oil within the current boundaries of the world-renowned Virunga National Park – famed for its mountain gorillas. Africa's oldest national park, Virunga is protected by law, but oil concessions cover 85 per cent of its surface. The integrity and natural values of Virunga may be greatly damaged by oil developments which can involve seismic tests, forest clearing, and increased human presence, threatening wildlife and local livelihoods.

WWF now urges UK oil company SOCO – the only company with plans to operate inside Virunga – to abandon these plans and pledge to keep out of UN World Heritage Sites.



Find out more: 

UN body calls for no oil exploration in Virunga

Concerned about proposed oil exploration in Virunga National Park, UNESCO's World Heritage Committee – which identifies the world's most valued natural and cultural sites – has called for cancelation of exploration permits. One of Africa's first World Heritage Sites, Virunga is rich in biodiversity and supports over 50,000 people. Oil exploration could cause great destruction and mean the park will lose its World Heritage status.

Virunga National Park could be worth US \$1.1 billion per year if developed sustainably, and generate 45,000 permanent jobs rather than being given over to potentially-damaging oil extraction according to a new study titled *'The Economic Value of Virunga National Park'*.



Find out more: 

WWF's Illegal Wildlife Trade campaign set out to address a massive recent escalation in illegal killing and trade of elephants and rhinos. The campaign successfully challenged governments at the highest levels that wildlife crime is both malignant and widespread and must be addressed effectively and urgently for the sake of wildlife, their habitats, sustainable economic development and national security.

African leaders condemn illegal wildlife trade

African leaders stated that recent large scale poaching and illegal wildlife trade is a major threat to national security and sustainable development, while also destroying Africa's wildlife resources. In May at the African Development Bank meeting in Marrakech, ADB President Dr Donald Kaberuka and Gabon President Ali Bongo Odimbo spoke at the launch of the ADB/WWF Marrakesh Declaration, a 10-point action plan to combat wildlife crime, with improved law enforcement, stricter penalties, and greater cooperation, including action to reduce demand.

At a UN event in New York in September key government leaders called for UN action to combat wildlife crime, citing threats to peace and links to organized crime.



Find out more:   

US president announces action against wildlife crime

During a state visit to Tanzania in July, United States President Barack Obama said poaching and trafficking are threatening Africa's wildlife and have expanded into coordinated slaughter commissioned by armed gangs and criminal syndicates. He announced a suite of measures, including an interagency Presidential Task Force on Wildlife Trafficking, to support anti-poaching, regional law enforcement, and reducing illicit trade and demand. Countries like Tanzania are losing their wildlife resources and the lives of rangers and law enforcement personnel, requiring international intervention. WWF is calling on all governments – especially those of demand countries such as China, Vietnam, Thailand and the US to clamp down on the illegal trade and demand.



Find out more: 

New rhino breeding groups created to spread risk

The need for action to combat the illegal wildlife trade is dramatised by the crisis facing Africa's rhinos.

Kenya's black rhinos are under siege, with the population dropping to less than 600 in 2013. In 2012 30 were killed for their horn and in 2013 a further 37 have been illegally killed. In response, the Kenya authorities have moved 21 rhinos in August to create new breeding populations in safer areas.

Creation of new breeding populations in safer areas is also being used in South Africa, the country at the front line of the rhino wars where illegal killing of rhinos continues to mount: from a low of 13 killed in 2007, 448 were killed in 2011, 668 in 2012, and already this year over 670 rhino have been killed illegally – more than in 2012.



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.

Progress in curbing the shark fin trade

In Hong Kong, WWF has gained significant support for its campaign to stop shark fin consumption. In September the government issued a ban on shark fin and bluefin tuna for official dining, and more than 250 companies and catering businesses have dropped shark fin from their menus.

And in Singapore – together with Hong Kong, two of the main destinations for shark fin – WWF has worked with seafood businesses to promote sustainable seafood choices. Successes include commitments by Singapore's two largest supermarkets chains, Cold Storage and NTUC Fairprice, to drop shark products from their shelves, and 10 hotels have removed shark fin from their menus.



© naturepl.com / Jeff Rotman / WWF

Call to stop trade and use of shark fin in Jakarta

The Vice-Governor of Indonesia's Jakarta Province, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, has agreed to be a WWF Ambassador for the Save Our Sharks campaign, and urged restaurateurs in Jakarta City to stop sale and consumption of shark products, ahead of legislation that will enforce a ban. Indonesia is one of the top 20 countries known for shark fishing, contributing to the more than 100 million sharks killed annually, mostly for their fins. In three months WWF has gained 11,000 signatures on a petition in support of banning shark fin consumption.



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Find out more: 

“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
WWF International Director General

Nepal’s tiger numbers climbing

A survey of wild tigers in Nepal announced in July estimates 198 individuals – a 63 per cent increase since the last estimate in 2009 – establishing Nepal as the pace setter among the tiger range states that committed in 2010 to double their national tiger numbers by 2022. Tigers are found in the Terai Arc landscape, a WWF priority area, across 15 protected area complexes and other areas in Nepal and India. The national survey was also the first to be done in coordination with India, and the joint results for the shared Terai Arc landscape will be released later this year. Nepal’s estimates showed strong growth in the Bardia National Park, where the population has tripled to an estimated 50 tigers, and Chitwan, home to Nepal’s largest tiger population.



Find out more: 

Regular surveys needed to confirm tigers increasing

WWF has called on all 13 tiger range states to conduct a series of tiger counts through to 2022 to determine progress towards the target to double tiger numbers agreed at the high level Tiger Summit hosted in St Petersburg by the Russian Government and World Bank in 2010. A key outcome of the summit was that tiger range states agreed to measures on trade and protection to achieve a doubling of wild tigers to 6,000 by 2022, the next Year of the Tiger in the Chinese calendar. Determining the number of tigers in the wild is difficult due to the rugged and isolated terrain they occupy and their elusive nature. But new survey techniques including the use of more durable camera traps is making the counts easier and more accurate.



Find out more: 

International cooperation to protect big cats

Russia and China have agreed on joint conservation of the Amur tiger and Far East leopard along their border. The agreement, signed in June, includes joint monitoring of tigers, leopards and their prey species, building on a network of protected areas in the neighbouring provinces of Primorsky in Russia and Heilongjiang in China. Tigers have already been seen crossing the border.

WWF is pressing for recognition of a transboundary conservation corridor linking Nepal’s Bardia National Park with a wildlife sanctuary in India, to enable large mammals such as elephant, rhino and tiger to move north and south between the protected areas. The proposed Karnali corridor is threatened by planned dams and roads.



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WWF's Earth Hour started as a lights out event in just one city in 2007 and has grown into the world's largest grassroots environmental movement, active in over 150 countries and 7000 cities and towns. Earth Hour's unique mix of on-the-ground activity and massive digital engagement has enabled a global community to go 'beyond the hour', crowdsourcing actions from individuals, businesses, organisations and governments on environmental issues across the planet. Earth Hour Blue now takes up the shift from an event to a movement. By mobilising crowdsourcing and crowdfunding for causes, creativity and innovation, Earth Hour Blue will support urgent environmental initiatives worldwide.

Paraguay's forests gain further protection

The Government of Paraguay has extended its Zero Deforestation Law – aimed at stopping further clearance of the critically-threatened Atlantic Forest – until end 2018. The Atlantic Forest, a WWF priority area, shelters 7 per cent of the world's known animals and plants, but has been reduced to just 7 per cent of its former extent, shared with Brazil and Argentina. In 2004, with deforestation rates rated the worst in the Americas, the first logging moratorium was passed, reducing deforestation by 90 per cent. WWF used the 2013 Earth Hour platform to mobilize support for this the third extension. WWF is also working with government and civil society to implement a Payment for Environmental Services programme that would compensate landowners who do not clear their forest.



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Find out more: 

More Earth Hour 2013 successes

WWF's 2013 Earth Hour campaign in Russia gained 127,000 supporters in favour of a ban on industrial logging in protective forests across an area twice the size of France. The Russian Government is now preparing amendments in the forest legislation, to be reviewed and approved by the State Duma.

After a people-powered marine campaign for Earth Hour 2013, Argentina's Senate unanimously approved the creation of "Banco Namuncurá (Burdwood)", a 3.4 million hectare Marine Protected Area (MPA) that triples the proportion of Argentina's seas under protection, although a small area is in dispute.



© Earth Hour

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.

Conservation advances in Colombia and Peru

In June, indigenous communities, conservation authorities and WWF celebrated 10 years of success in restoring Peru's largest wetland complex. The 3.8 million ha Abanico del Pastaza wetland, between the Pastaza and Corrientes rivers in the Amazon, was threatened by pollution from oil drilling. But the communities mobilised, populations of fish and turtles have recovered, and the oil drilling is now monitored.

Colombia is strengthening its national protected area network to meet the Convention on Biological Diversity targets. New protected areas have been created in the Caribbean for deep water corals, and in the Amazon for tropical forest, where the Chiribiquete National park covers 3 million hectares.



© WWF

Promising news from Heart of Borneo

Video camera traps captured the first footage of critically endangered Sumatran rhinos in Indonesia's East Kalimantan on Borneo, prompting the authorities to develop estimates of numbers and protection measures.

Over 50,000 trees have been planted across 300,000 hectares as part of a restoration project in the Heart of Borneo, Asia's last great rainforest and a WWF priority area. Using local knowledge families from three villages created a forested corridor between two national parks. A WWF field school on sustainable farming encouraged collaborative problem solving. The project aims to take pressure off natural forest, which includes important orang-utan habitat, and help secure freshwater supplies.



© Alain Compost / WWF-Canon

New protected area for Mekong River

The Cambodian Government has protected a 56 km section of flooded forest in the mainstream of the Mekong River to safeguard key threatened species and fisheries resources. Situated in northern Cambodia, the area includes tall riverine forest, waterways and islands and supports iconic species such as the Irrawaddy dolphin. WWF worked with the authorities and local communities to build awareness and establish sustainable livelihoods to help ensure critical resources such as fish and timber are sustainably managed for local communities, and to reduce pressure on this area which is threatened by damaging and illegal fishing, mining and logging. However planned mainstream dams upriver hugely threaten Mekong ecosystems and livelihoods.



© WWF-Cambodia / Tan Someth Bunwath

Find out more:



Oil drilling banned in top marine priority area

A decade-long campaign to protect a global marine conservation priority area has succeeded with the Norwegian Government announcing in October that Lofoten will not be opened up for oil exploration. Home to the spawning area for the world's largest cod stock, the largest known cold water coral reef on the planet, and one of Europe's biggest seabird colonies, WWF argued that the value of this area for biodiversity and sustainable development is worth far more over time than short-term income from oil. The decision to prevent oil exploration also covers other coastal areas including Vesterålen, Senja, More and Jan Mayen, and parts of the high Arctic.



Find out more: 

Moves to protect marine and freshwater dolphins

Mexico is to implement sustainable fishing practices to reduce threats to the critically-endangered vaquita porpoise, the world's smallest and rarest marine mammal. Less than 200 vaquita are found only in the Gulf of California on Mexico's west coast, where they are threatened by drift gill nets. A WWF call for protection of the vaquita through sustainable fishing practices gained 38,000 supporters from 127 countries. Gill nets will be substituted with more selective nets, and fishermen trained in their use and compensated.

Bolivia is to protect the bufeo, a freshwater dolphin found mainly in two watersheds. The presence of over 4,500 dolphins indicates the freshwater ecosystems are in good health.



Find out more: 

New Zealand urged to save highly endangered dolphin

Top marine scientists have expressed extreme concern for the survival of the Maui's dolphin, urging the government to take immediate action to protect all areas of the dolphin's habitat. Only an estimated 55 individuals survive, and each dolphin lost to entanglement in a fishing net – the main cause of death – is a huge blow to their survival. In June the Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) predicted the dolphin faces effective extinction within 20 years unless their full range is protected from gill netting and trawling. After WWF mobilised 70,000 calls for greater protection, the New Zealand Government proposed extending the area where gill nets would be banned, but this will still not fully protect the dolphin.



Find out more: 

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.

Indonesia extends clearing controls for two years

In June, the Indonesian Government extended the moratorium on deforestation by two years, in a move that will prohibit new clearing permits for primary forest and peatlands in high conservation value forests and plantations, covering an area of 43 million hectares. Applauding this important step to control deforestation, WWF is calling for a unified approach to forest management which coordinates planning between central and local government. The moratorium can help strengthen forest governance and reduce carbon emissions from forest loss. Indonesia has also established an agency to implement the country's Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+) programme which compensates for the financial loss incurred by not cutting trees.



© WWF-Indonesia

Expanded pulp and palm oil plantations linked to Asian haze

WWF has renewed calls for zero-burn policies to be enacted as satellites show that almost 90 per cent of the fire hotspots that blanketed Singapore and parts of Malaysia with the worst haze since 1997 were in Indonesia's Riau Province on the island of Sumatra. And many of these fires were in peatland, which can trigger huge emissions of carbon dioxide, a primary cause of climate change. The call comes from an Indonesian NGO coalition Eyes on the Forest – comprising WWF, Jikalahari and Wahli. Riau has long been a centre of controversy over forest clearance and plantation establishment for pulp and palm oil. Zero burn policies would outlaw the use of fire to clear forest.



© Rachel Chew / WWF-Canon

UN rivers convention close to reality

Thirty countries have acceded to the UN convention on transboundary river use – only five countries are now needed for the bedrock agreement to come into force. WWF has worked for a decade to realise this convention, as it establishes the rights and duties of states sharing freshwater systems and fosters interstate cooperation.

To help secure Mexico's future water supply, WWF is working with CONAGUA, the National Water Commission, on a water reserves programme to secure the water flows required to maintain environmental functions across 780,000 km² of hydrological basins including 55 Ramsar wetland sites, and 97 protected areas. The initiative is on track to secure decrees for the first 19 basins by 2014.



© Adam Osvelt / WWF-Greater Mekong

Find out more: 

Find out more: 

New initiative to make salmon farming sustainable

A new salmon aquaculture sustainability initiative aims to achieve continued and dramatic reductions in the environmental and social impacts of producing one of the world's most popular farmed fish. Under the Global Salmon Initiative 15 leading salmon producers – representing 70 per cent of global farmed salmon – announced in August in Trondheim, Norway, they will certify their farms to the Aquaculture Certification Council standard, which WWF helped establish. This aims to drastically reduce the impact of salmon farming in some of the world's most ecologically important regions. Five years ago, global aquaculture surpassed wild caught as the primary source of seafood consumed by humans, and two years ago aquaculture by volume surpassed global beef production.



© Jo Benn / WWF-Canon

Find out more: 

Fight for the Great Barrier Reef

The campaign to save Australia's Great Barrier Reef #fightforthereef was boosted by the UN World Heritage Commission's decision requesting Australia's Federal and Queensland governments to not allow development which would impact on the reef's World Heritage values. Plans to develop mega-ports to export minerals threaten the integrity and wildlife riches of this world-renowned reef, and the AU\$6billion 60,000 job reef-based tourism sector. Progress on water quality and farm runoff could be buried under millions of tonnes of seabed material dredged for port development and dumped in the reef. WWF is calling for no further port development until a plan to properly protect the reef is in place. A Twitter storm in June mobilized millions of people in support of the iconic reef.



© WWF-Canon / Jürgen Freund

Find out more: 

Positive moves towards sustainable fishing

The world's largest pollock fishery has gained certification by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). Certifying Russia's Okhotsk Sea Pollock fishery has been controversial with WWF filing an objection earlier this year. But changes agreed with the fishery to improve fishing methods and monitoring set the scene for transforming Russia's fishing industry towards sustainability.

WWF has welcomed the first comprehensive management plan to achieve sustainable exploitation of key fish stocks in the Mediterranean, and hopes this represents a serious move towards responsible fishing. Announced in May this plan covers a fishery that targets small pelagic fish, mostly sardine and anchovy in the Adriatic Sea.



TM

US gearing up to address climate change

The climate change plan announced in June by US President Barack Obama will place limits on carbon pollution from coal-fired power plants – the largest source of carbon emissions in the US – and eliminate public funding for such plants overseas. WWF welcomes this move, while noting that still more is required to meet emission reduction targets, and will continue to push for a large increase in US funding for renewable energy generation abroad.

The US and China have agreed measures to combat climate change at a meeting in July. The actions include measures to reduce carbon emissions from heavy duty vehicles, smart grids to boost use of renewable energy and energy efficiency in buildings.



© WWF-Canon / Adam Osweil

Find out more: 

Mexico acts on climate change

Mexico launched a 2050 Climate Change Vision which charts the path to a low carbon future, aiming to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 50 per cent against 2000 levels. The vision follows on from Mexico's landmark General Climate Change law passed last year.

To enhance the role of Mexico's protected areas (PAs) in protecting biodiversity and strengthen climate change mitigation and adaptation, WWF is working with the National Commission on Protected Areas and other organisations to map a conservation network including biodiversity corridors which will help secure more than 1,750 vertebrate species by enabling them to disperse.



© AFP

Find out more: 

Accelerating climate change demands action

Climate change is happening faster, more intensely and often at unprecedented rates of change according to the Fifth Assessment Working Group 1 report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Samantha Smith, WWF's Climate and Energy Initiative leader said we must act urgently now or face frightening new impacts. Since the last major IPCC report in 2007, terrestrial glacier loss and sea level rise have greatly accelerated and Arctic sea ice loss is higher than projected. Acidification of the ocean has increased, which, together with ocean warming, poses huge threats to marine ecosystems including coral reefs. WWF calls on governments and investors to shift investments away from fossil fuels causing climate change to safe renewable energy sources.



© NASA

Find out more: 

Perhaps WWF's greatest strength is its people, the staff and officers who together 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.

WWF honours young marine conservationist

Kerstin Forsberg, a 28-year-old marine conservation biologist and campaigner from Peru has been awarded the WWF International President's Award 2013 at the WWF Annual Conference in Wyoming, US. The award aims to acknowledge and encourage inspiring achievements of people under 30 who are working to conserve nature around the world. Kerstin leads community-based marine research, environmental education and participatory sustainable development initiatives in Peru. Before becoming Founder-Director of the non-profit organisation Planeta Océano in 2007, she was a prolific volunteer with many ocean conservation and green educational groups.



© Planeta Océano

Outstanding conservation leaders recognized

Two outstanding conservationists received Leaders for a Living Planet awards in June, recognising Dr Thomas Lovejoy for his unique contribution to global conservation including the debt-for-nature swap, work on forest fragmentation and his unflagging advocacy for conservation as a global priority.

Dr Trudy Ecofrey was recognized for her passionate leadership in restoring wildlife to the US Northern Great Plains, and support of the Oglala Sioux and the National Park Service to create the first tribal national park in the US and restore North American bison to these lands.



© Foto cedida por el entrevistado

WWF cheers champions for sustainable fishing

Champions for sustainable fishing in the Mediterranean were recognised with Conservation Merit awards at the WWF Annual Conference. Dr Sergi Tudela has personally led the campaign to stop overfishing of the Mediterranean bluefin tuna for over a decade, seeking to restore this iconic fishery to good health. Fighting years of greed and vested interests, and with tuna stocks close to collapse, the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT) finally heeded the science and reduced quotas: the fishery is beginning to recover. And a committee representing all stakeholders involved in the artisanal Mediterranean sandeel fishery was commended for its novel participative, bottom-up approach to achieving sustainable fishery management.



© WWF-Canon / Richard Stonehouse

Find out more: 

WWF stages environmental discussion in Abu Dhabi

WWF staged its third TEDxWWF conference in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in May, bringing together 11 inspiring speakers to share ideas and solutions under the theme 'One Planet Living'. Talks ranged from the invention of bio-bricks and organising social movements, to solar power, environmental education and the new Earth Hour Blue development, bringing in crowdsourcing and crowdfunding to support conservation action across the planet. The hashtag #TEDxWWF became the most trending topic in the UAE, demonstrating the event's ability to promote sharing of solutions for sustainable development.



Find out more: 

Pope Francis calls for protection of the Amazon

In Brazil at the World Youth Day in July, during the first international trip of his papacy, Pope Francis called on Brazil's bishops to defend the Amazon and its peoples, and challenged young people worldwide to protect the planet's environment from harm. WWF applauded the World Youth Day message, which called for respect and protection for the entire creation, noting Pope Francis is one of the most significant world leaders to speak on behalf of nature and the many species and wild places under threat in one of his most important early speeches. Ahead of the event, WWF and the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) wrote jointly to his Holiness requesting he call on young Catholics to help turn the tide of destruction in the Amazon.



Find out more: 

Polar bear summit

The polar bear conservation treaty agreed 40 years ago by the five countries with polar bear populations successfully dealt with the main threats to this magnificent species – sport hunting and commercial harvesting – such that total populations have increased to 20-25,000 individuals. But the impact of climate change and resulting loss of summer sea ice, which is vital for polar bears, their prey and other ice-dependent species, now poses a major and growing threat to the survival of many iconic Arctic species. In Moscow in December, the five range states – Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia and US – will come together again to celebrate the successes to date and identify how to secure the polar bear for the next 40 years in the face of climate change.



© WWF-Canon / Jack Stein Grove

Earth Hour goes blue!

Earth Hour 2014, on Saturday 29 March, will see the launch of a new phase in the development of WWF's mass engagement initiative. Earth Hour Blue will mobilise crowdsourcing and crowdfunding to support conservation and sustainable development projects around the world, enabling Earth Hour to evolve from an annual event to a global movement enabling communities to take responsibility for their environment.



© Nina Munn / WWF

Find out more: 

Protecting the world's special places and species

In November 2014 the World Parks Congress will be held in Sydney Australia. This once-a-decade event brings together environment ministers, protected area (PA) specialists, local community representatives, donors and NGOs to review progress in protecting and managing the world's most precious natural places and species. Since its creation in 1961, WWF has helped establish, fund and/or manage more than one billion hectares of PAs on land and at sea, by far the biggest contribution of any conservation organisation worldwide, and one of WWF's most significant achievements in protecting biodiversity and supporting sustainable resource use such as fishing and forestry. WWF will use this platform to strengthen partnerships and seek new commitments in priority areas.



© Mi. Mabari / WWF-Mediterranean

Crucial 2014 climate summit to be held in Peru

WWF welcomes the announcement that Peru will host the December 2014 high level session of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). WWF believes that as a developing country, and with significant forest areas, Peru is well placed to bridge the divide between developed and developing countries on how to combat climate change, including how to limit the carbon emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.



© Earth Hour

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WWF highlights in numbers

780,000 KM²

Mexico's Water Reserves programme aims to secure environmental functions, and long-term freshwater sustainability, across 780,000km² of hydrological basins

127,000

the number of people who signed up to the WWF Earth Hour petition in Russia showing support for greater protection of critical Russian forests

63%

a survey of wild tigers in Nepal shows an increase of 63 per cent in the population to an estimated 198 individual tigers, establishing Nepal as the pace-setter among the 13 tiger range state countries aiming to double their wild tiger populations by 2022

30

the number of countries that have acceded to the UN transboundary rivers convention, requiring only a further five countries to join for the convention to come into force



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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