



Conservation Highlights

October 2015

Recent achievements and challenges in WWF's work to reach the global goals

WWF's Earth Hour started in Sydney in 2007 as a citizen initiative to demand action on climate change and has grown to become the world's largest grassroots movement for the environment in the years since. In 2015, Earth Hour spans more than 7,000 cities in 172 countries and territories, uniting individuals, communities, companies and governments to drive awareness and action on climate through the year, harnessing the power of the crowd to achieve tangible environmental impact.

A global moment of solidarity for climate action

From Antarctica to the International Space Station, WWF's Earth Hour transcended borders on Saturday 28th March 2015 mobilizing millions to use their power to take climate action. In a year of record participation, individuals, businesses, city skylines and more than 10,400 landmarks in 172 countries and territories switched off their lights as a symbol of their commitment to change climate change. From the first lights out event in Samoa, across seven continents to Tahiti, the 'hour' inspired unprecedented unity and actions from people around the world to tackle local climate issues such as access to sustainable food, renewable energy, climate education and drive climate-friendly policy and legislation.



Find out more: 

Powering tangible change, creating lasting impact

Earth Hour 2015 united people around the world to send a clear message that climate action is a priority not just for them, as individuals, but collectively for our planet. From supporters in Russia, Brazil, Scotland, Switzerland and Colombia signing petitions for stronger climate policy to WWF teams driving awareness on sustainable food and agriculture through Earth Hour campaigns in Australia, the UK and Finland and participants in India, the Philippines and China promoting access to renewable energy, Earth Hour 2015 generated an unprecedented momentum amidst the public to be a part of climate solutions. In total, Earth Hour powered more than 625,000 individual actions online and offline to create lasting impact 'beyond the hour' and help change climate change.



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Seoul named Global Earth Hour Capital for 2015

The city of Seoul was named the 'Global Earth Hour Capital 2015' in WWF's Earth Hour City Challenge. Impressed by the comprehensive approach to tackle the causes of climate change at the city level by ramping up the use of renewable energy, the international panel of judges selected the South Korean capital from a shortlist of national winners from 16 other countries. Seoul succeeds Canada's Vancouver and South Africa's Cape Town, previous winners of the award, and provides a role model for the many other fast growing cities in South-east Asia. It aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 10 million tonnes and ensure at least 20 percent of electricity is procured from renewable sources by 2020, through increased use of solar power and green fuels for public transport.



Find out more: 

WWF has increased the profile of ocean conservation this year, particularly the importance of conserving marine habitats for food security and livelihoods. WWF has played the lead role in making the ocean's economic value, the threats to it, and the solutions to revive it, one of the strong, persistent stories of 2015.

The campaign delivered world-first analyses in landmark reports that drew major global media and social media attention, reaching many millions. The reports' messages have been quoted by policymakers, opinion-shaping institutions and eminent scientists. It is now common to read of the ocean being the world's seventh biggest economy, worth at least US\$2.5 trillion a year and that about half of the world's marine species populations have been lost in 40 years.

Australia on probation to protect Great Barrier Reef

The campaign contributed strongly to sparing the Great Barrier Reef from the threat to dump waste from dredging for a coal export terminal within the World Heritage Site (WHS). WWF's signature campaign for the reef helped secure a World Heritage Committee decision that puts the Australian government on "probation" until the health of the reef improves. The campaign profiled the declining health of the reef, and mobilised more than 500,000 signatures calling for a ban on dumping of seabed spoil within the WHS area. In addition, campaign tactics included a smart-phone accessible virtual reality tour of the reef, a global poll and WWF's most successful Facebook post.



Find out more: 

Campaign links ocean health and sustainable development

WWF is building a strong profile for ocean conservation by convincing decision makers of the ocean's relevance to core sustainable development agendas. The reports, *Reviving the Ocean Economy*, *Marine Protected Areas: Smart Investments in Ocean Health*, and the *Living Blue Planet Report* – a marine edition of WWF's *Living Planet Report* – attracted outstanding global media attention. From BBC to Xinhua, Al Jazeera to CCN and the major wires, Twitter and Facebook, the reports made big splashes. Since the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in September, the campaign has emphasized the need for investment and political will to successfully implement goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources.



Find out more: 

WWF takes message to influential opinion makers

WWF's presence at events like The Economist World Ocean Summit, the Our Ocean Conference in Chile and meetings of the World Economic Forum enabled our experts to directly engage policymakers and leaders from civil society and business. WWF messages are repeated by officials at the highest level. "Our economies, our livelihoods and our food all depend on our oceans," said US President Obama via video to the conference in Chile. US Secretary of State Kerry emphasized the sea is acidifying faster than at any other point in history, and that one-third of fish stocks were overexploited. WWF Int'l President Yolanda Kakabadse met with Kerry and discussed how to keep the ocean at the forefront of climate talks.



Find out more: 

Covering 71 per cent of the planet's surface, the ocean sustains life on Earth, producing half our oxygen, absorbing and distributing heat around the planet, and greatly influencing the world's weather systems. With as many as 100 million species, marine biodiversity far exceeds that on land. The ocean also supports billions of people who rely on it for food security and livelihoods.

But marine habitats – especially in coastal areas – are under ever-increasing threats from human activities. Above all, the ocean is threatened by the impacts of climate change, especially acidification and warming.

WWF's Global Goal: The world's most important fisheries and ocean ecosystems are productive and resilient, and improve livelihoods and biodiversity.*

Important steps to protect high seas marine biodiversity

The UN General Assembly has resolved to develop a legally binding treaty for the conservation of marine biodiversity on the high seas. This is the first global treaty process in over two decades that is uniquely targeted on sustainable use of marine biodiversity. As a member of the High Seas Alliance, WWF will continue to advocate for a strong agreement and its implementation.

WWF and partners gathered more than 800,000 signatures urging the International Sea Bed Authority to apply more precaution in developing a draft regulatory framework on seabed mining, which should include environmental management plans, MPAs and greater transparency.



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Scaling up conservation in the Western Indian Ocean

The 10 parties to the Nairobi Convention have agreed to support an integrated ocean management approach in the northern Mozambique Channel (NMC), a high conservation priority area that is also home to 10 million people. The NMC is rich in marine natural assets, and supports important fisheries and ecotourism vital for the livelihoods and food security of coastal communities, but faces threats from oil and gas exploitation, illegal and overfishing, and destructive development. This decision caps two years of effort by WWF and partners to conceive a joint vision, embed it in national agendas and build a true partnership approach around the NMC.



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Boost for marine conservation in Coral Triangle

A new 277,000 ha locally managed marine protected area (MPA) declared by the Indonesian government will help secure both marine biodiversity and the livelihoods and food security of coastal communities in a priority area of the famed Coral Triangle – the world's richest marine area, home to over three-quarters of all coral species and a regional focus of WWF's global ocean campaign. A top diving site, rich in fish and cetacean species, the MPA lies in the Alor Archipelago in East Nusa Tenggara. A year-round nutrient upwelling supports some of the region's most important fisheries. WWF has worked for 10 years with the authorities and local communities to stop overfishing and destructive fishing practices, while also pressing for creation of the MPA.



© Frederick J. Weyerhaeuser / WWF

Find out more: 

* The Global Goals are still under development and the final wording may still change.

Driftnet fishing banned in Russia's EEZ

Russia has passed legislation banning driftnets in the country's exclusive economic zone – a damaging fishing practice used mostly by domestic and Japanese fishermen. Set to catch sockeye salmon, driftnets up to 30 km long have a major impact on marine ecosystems, killing huge numbers of seabirds, marine mammals and non-target fish. Damage to fisheries from driftnets is estimated at up to 10 billion roubles (approx. €161 million) a year, and more than 1.2 million seabirds and 15,000 marine mammals were killed annually in the period 1993-1999, when independent records were kept. The use of driftnets is banned worldwide on the high seas. WWF has worked to minimize the impact of driftnets for over a decade. The ban comes into force in January 2016.



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Mobilizing MSC as the sustainable fishing standard

WWF has successfully objected to the proposed certification of a major Indian Ocean tuna fishery to help ensure the quality of MSC certification. This landmark decision highlights that current management of tuna in the Indian Ocean does not meet MSC sustainability requirements. WWF argued that without management control of exploitation of the tuna stock, the fishery would not achieve sustainability. WWF plans to use this case study to avoid weak MSC assessments by poorly performing certifiers. This decision is expected to have a huge impact on future certification processes and help reshape the certification landscape for tuna, emphasizing sustainability.



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Legal battle over illegal fishing

Countries facing depletion of their fisheries by foreign vessels have been thrown a lifeline, with an international tribunal ruling that flag states can be held liable for not taking necessary measures to prevent illegal, unreported or unregulated fishing operations by their vessels in the waters of other countries. With WWF acting as a “friend of the court”, the international tribunal ruled that:

- a flag state must carry out due diligence to ensure its vessels are not engaging in illegal fishing
- coastal states must cooperate to manage shared fish stocks, and to ensure that fisheries are managed sustainably before any access agreement is entered into

These new tools can help bring back fish to the people who most depend upon the sea for food and livelihoods.



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Wildlife is integral to the ecosystems on which people rely for survival. Yet across the globe, wildlife is under threat, with a broad range of species being driven towards extinction. Global wildlife populations have fallen by more than half in just 40 years as measured by WWF's Living Planet Report 2014.

Conserving the world's wildlife is an enormous challenge, but progress is possible. Remarkable successes have been achieved in bringing wildlife populations back from the brink. Together, we can ensure that the world's wildlife has the space and resources it needs to thrive in harmony with people.

WWF's Global Goal: The world's most iconic and endangered species are secured and recovering in the wild.*

Historic UN resolution against wildlife crime

The first-ever UN General Assembly resolution tackling the illegal wildlife trade was adopted by all 193 UN member states in July. Initiated by Gabon and Germany, it was co-sponsored by another 84 countries, including key players such as China, Kenya, South Africa, Thailand, Vietnam and the US. The resolution recognises the threat organized wildlife crime poses to good governance, national security and sustainable development as well as wildlife, and calls for concerted action to counter the global poaching crisis. WWF played a key role in the process by providing technical advice and advocacy support in the run up to its adoption, and the final version incorporates all of WWF's major asks. WWF will now focus on assisting countries to implement the resolution.



© Martin Harvey / WWF

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Calling time on major domestic ivory markets

China and the US have promised to phase out their domestic ivory trades. While no deadlines have been set, both presidents pledged to take "timely steps to halt the domestic commercial trade in ivory" as part of global efforts to tackle the poaching crisis. Around 30,000 African elephants are killed each year. Both countries also publicly crushed stockpiles of confiscated ivory to signal their commitment to tackling the illegal trade. Meanwhile, Thailand has begun regulating its domestic market, resulting in 44,000 people registering over 220 tonnes of ivory. WWF welcomes these measures and the determination of US and China to close their markets. And the sooner the better. In June, Tanzania announced it had lost 60 percent of its elephants in the past five years.



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Huge global effort targets illegal wildlife trade

The largest ever international law enforcement operation against wildlife crime resulted in the detention of 300 suspected poachers and traffickers, including some usually untouchable kingpins. Regarded as a major success, Operation COBRA III was coordinated across 62 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and America in May, and was supported by international agencies, such as INTERPOL and Europol. Among the 600 illegal shipments seized around the globe were 12 tonnes of ivory and 119 rhino horns. The scale of the operation highlights the seriousness of organized wildlife crime as well as the growing political will to tackle it. TRAFFIC supported the operation by providing information directly to help countries target major wildlife criminals.



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Find out more: 

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WWF's Year of the Tiger campaign in 2010 was central to mobilizing global efforts to save wild tigers. With many partners, we helped to develop Tx2 – the global strategy to double wild tiger numbers by 2022. In the tiger range states, we worked with governments and others to create the national plans that underpin it. Now we are seeing the results.

Counting tigers is critical to the success of Tx2

WWF is urging all tiger range states in Southeast Asia to conduct systematic tiger surveys, which are a critical component of Tx2 – the global campaign to double wild tigers by 2022. No national counts have yet been conducted in the region, where tigers are facing a crisis and could end up extinct. But the Thai government is discussing its tiger numbers, while Malaysia – where experts fear there may be as few as 250 tigers left – announced that it would carry out its first national survey. There are thought to be no breeding populations of tigers in Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos, and tiger numbers are unknown in Indonesia and Myanmar. These countries must all count their tigers before it is too late. WWF is ready to assist with surveys and follow-up conservation work.



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Roaring success for tiger conservation in Bhutan

The first national survey of Bhutan's tiger population has counted 103 tigers in the mountainous Himalayan country – a significant increase on the previous estimate of 75 tigers. Using the latest methods and equipment, the survey found tigers living throughout Bhutan, some as high as 4,200 metres. Bhutan has now joined other tiger range state champions in the sub-continent to have completed a full survey. Earlier this year India reported an increase from 1706 in 2010 to 2,226 tigers; and the most recent survey in Nepal, a country showing continued success in eliminating poaching, showed tigers are up from 155 to 198. The first systematic survey in Bangladesh using improved methods showed less tigers at 106 but earlier numbers may be overestimates.



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Top tiger protection rating for Russian reserve

Sikhote-Alin Nature Reserve in Russia's Far East became the second global site to receive Conservation Assured | Tiger Standards (CA|TS) accreditation, the highest accolade in tiger conservation site management. WWF helped to develop CA|TS, which is a tool for monitoring and guaranteeing the effectiveness of the management of tiger sites. Sikhote-Alin follows Chitwan National Park in Nepal, which was the first protected area to be CA|TS accredited in February. Russia is now planning to roll CA|TS out at three further sites in the next six months, which will help to enhance efforts to conserve the Amur tiger. India, Nepal and Bangladesh are also planning to join the initiative, while discussions are underway in Bhutan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand.



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First global plan for polar bears agreed

All five polar bear range states have committed to a plan to protect and manage the bears and their habitat. Canada, Denmark (Greenland), Norway, Russia and the US adopted the unprecedented 10-year plan in September. It will tackle direct threats such as shipping, oil and gas, and conflict with communities. It does not however, address the major threat to polar bears, the loss of sea ice habitat. The Arctic is warming twice as fast as the rest of the globe and research suggests that two-thirds of polar bears could be lost by 2050 as the sea ice shrinks. WWF has supported measures to reduce conflict, and is proposing conservation measures for the “Last Ice Area” as well as calling for a strong climate deal in Paris.



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Upswing in the world's largest orangutan population

Over a decade of WWF work in Sebangau in Indonesia is starting to bear fruit. The orangutan population – the largest in the world – has risen by 7 per cent since 2007, and now stands at 5,826 individuals. WWF started work in Sebangau in 2002 and was the main partner of the government during the establishment of the national park in 2004.

In other positive news, the Dwima group has committed to supporting the conservation of the species in all their timber concessions, which cover almost 450,000 hectares. This kind of commitment is critical to the survival of the species since 70 percent of orangutans live outside protected areas – mainly in logging concessions.



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Mixed fortunes for the world's rhino species

For the third time since 2011, Nepal has gone a year without losing a rhino to poachers. This success is based on political will, the dedication of rangers and conservationists, and the active involvement of communities, and has contributed to a 21 percent rise in the country's rhinos over the same period. Globally, effective conservation has seen greater one-horned rhinos increase to 3,555, including 645 in Nepal. The Javan rhino population has also inched up to 60 with recent births providing renewed hope.

However, the slaughter of rhinos in South Africa continues with 749 poached by end August – higher than at the same stage last year. And the Sumatran rhino is now in real peril. Extinct in the wild in Malaysia, there are fewer than 100 in the wild in Indonesia.



© Michael Raimondo / WWF

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Species reintroductions in the Danube-Carpathian Region

In a bid to boost populations of one of the six endangered sturgeon species in the Danube River, WWF released 50,000 sterlet sturgeons (*Acipenser ruthenus*) in recent months in Bulgarian waters, each sterlet tagged to help identify their movements and key habitats for better protection.

And 14 European bison, Europe's largest land mammal, were released in the Tarcu Mountains Natura 2000 site in the southern Carpathians – the second release in a year. The aim is to build a viable population of 300 bison by 2024. The species became extinct in the wild in 1927, but from 54 bison in captivity a new population has been created, and groups are being reintroduced into the wild where they help maintain natural processes.



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An estimated 13 million hectares of forests were lost each year between 2000 and 2010. In tropical rainforests particularly, deforestation continues to be an urgent environmental issue that jeopardizes people's livelihoods, threatens species, and intensifies global warming. Forests make a vital contribution to humanity, but their full potential will only be realized if we halt forest damage and destruction.

WWF's Global Goal: The integrity of the world's most important forests, including their benefits to human well-being, is enhanced and maintained.*

Expanding agriculture threatens the world's forests

Up to 170 million ha of forest could be lost between 2010-2030, mostly in 11 "deforestation fronts," if current trends continue says WWF's latest Living Forests report. The fronts – 10 are in the tropics – are in high biodiversity priority forests including the Amazon, Congo basin, Borneo, Greater Mekong, New Guinea and Sumatra. These forests contain some of the world's richest wildlife concentrations. Globally, the main cause of forest loss is expanding agriculture, including commercial livestock, palm oil and soy production. The report calls for forest loss to be reduced to near zero by 2020, so that forests can continue to store carbon, filter our water, supply wood, and provide habitat for millions of species and homes and food security for millions of people.



© Adriano Gambarini / WWF-Brazil

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Major win for forests at climate meeting

A 10-year international negotiation has agreed a mechanism to support countries to keep their forests standing. Globally, significant greenhouse gas emissions contributing to climate change are shown to come from forest damage or destruction. In June a UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) meeting finalised details on a mechanism (known as REDD+) to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. REDD+ will reward countries for keeping carbon stored in forests. The agreement includes rules for measuring and verifying forest carbon, and safeguards to protect biodiversity and the rights and knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities. WWF now calls for guaranteed finance for REDD+, and that REDD+ be part of the Paris climate deal.



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Brazil's Amazon protected area scheme nears target

The Amazon Region Protected Areas (ARPA) Programme, the world's largest protected area initiative which aims to protect and sustainably manage 60 million ha of the Brazilian Amazon, has reached almost 99 per cent of its target with the inclusion of six protected areas (PAs). ARPA now contains 111 PAs and a total supported area of 59.3 million ha. In 2002, ARPA was launched when WWF helped mobilize a partnership led by the Government of Brazil with partners including the World Bank, GEF and German Development Bank, to protect 12 per cent of the Brazilian Amazon. ARPA has added over 25 million ha of new PAs, improved management of an additional more than 30 million of existing PAs, and established a US\$215 million conservation fund to finance the programme.



© Zig Koch

Find out more: 

* The Global Goals are still under development and the final wording may still change.

Protected Areas help protect the world's climate

The governments of 17 Latin American and Caribbean countries agreed to promote the important role of protected areas (PAs) as natural solutions to address climate change at the climate summit in Paris at year end. Supported by WWF, REDPARQUES - the Latin American technical cooperation network on protected areas - signed a declaration to improve and multiply PA development in the region, and called on the UN Framework Commission on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to integrate PAs in climate discussions and plans. REDPARQUES notes there are over 30,000 PAs worldwide, covering an estimated 13 per cent of the planet's surface, and stresses the role of PAs in preventing release of carbon from vegetation and soil, in providing water for human use, and protecting biodiversity.



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Bold move to protect Sumatran forest

An innovative forest protection and restoration scheme has been agreed for important lowland tropical forest on the Indonesian island of Sumatra which has the highest rate of deforestation in the world. An area of 40,000 ha has been rezoned for restoration rather than clearing – effectively expanding the neighbouring Bukit Tigapuluh National Park by 25 per cent. The partnership of several organisations, including WWF, and local communities, has been granted a 60-year license to manage the area, home to an estimated 30 Sumatran tigers, as well as endangered Sumatran elephant and orangutan. This ecosystem restoration concession will explore revenue-generating activities to finance the forest restoration and management.



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African states agree to combat illegal timber trade

Five African countries have agreed to jointly address the huge loss of forests caused by illegal logging and trade. The national forest agencies of Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda signed the Zanzibar declaration on Illegal Trade in Timber and Other Forest Products during the World Forest Congress in Durban in September. Convened by WWF, TRAFFIC and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the agreement aims to build cooperative transboundary action to counter the illegal trade, which is causing huge environmental and economic damage. WWF's remote-sensing analysis reveals that forest loss in the period 2010–2012 amounted to 2.3 million hectares in Mozambique and 2 million hectares in Tanzania.



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Indigenous people take action to protect forest

An initiative led by two indigenous communities in Suriname aims to create a 7.2 million hectare conservation corridor that will link to, and expand, a huge transboundary protected area network in Brazil and French Guiana in the northern Amazon. In March the Trio and Wayana peoples presented a declaration to the Surinamese government, to initiate creation of the corridor which will cover half the country. Local communities are central to this initiative, which aims to protect one of the world's most intact forests with huge importance for biodiversity conservation, carbon storage and freshwater security. Next steps include work by WWF to explore sustainable funding opportunities, and a legal status for the conservation area.



© Brian O'Shea

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Freshwater is the world's most precious resource. Freshwater habitats house a large proportion of the world's biodiversity: more than 10 per cent of all known animals and about half of all known fish species. Yet despite its massive role in our lives, water is a surprisingly finite resource. Less than one per cent of the world's water is fresh and accessible.

Water is also hugely threatened. Climate change, population growth and changing consumption patterns are just some of the forces putting freshwater systems increasingly at risk.

WWF's Global Goal: Freshwater ecosystems and flow regimes in key river basins provide water for people and nature.*

Securing the world's largest tropical wetland

The governments of Bolivia, Brazil and Paraguay have jointly committed to the conservation and sustainable development of the shared Pantanal ecosystem, an area of 20 million hectares and the world's largest tropical wetland. Noting current development activities which negatively impact the Pantanal ecosystem and social and economic stability, the three governments made the announcement at the conference of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in Uruguay in June. Damaging activities include deforestation in the catchment, unsustainable soy and beef production and damming of waterways for hydropower. The Pantanal is a WWF priority for its role in providing water for human, agricultural and ecosystem services, for navigation, fishing and maintenance of biodiversity.



© WWF / Frans Schepers

Concerns over Mekong dam gather force

WWF has called for an urgent review of the Laos National Assembly's decision to approve construction of the controversial Don Sahong dam on the main stem of the Mekong river. The dam, to be built by Malaysia's Mega First Corporation Berhad, threatens the food security and livelihoods of 60 million people downstream in Cambodia and Vietnam, as well as the entire Mekong River ecosystem and its critically endangered Irrawaddy dolphins. Reports of the impending construction are a huge concern as the project is still the subject of international mediation to address the objections of neighbouring countries, opposition from leading scientists and local communities, and a petition signed by 250,000 people.



© Roland Seitre / WWF

Huge new Ramsar site declared in Mozambique

Mozambique announced the Ramsar designation of the 1,327 mill ha North Bank of the Zambezi delta, turning one of Africa's largest deltas into one of the continent's most important Ramsar sites. Combined with the 688,000 ha Zambezi delta South Bank site, designated in 2006, the new Ramsar complex now expands to 2,015 mill ha. The delta is one of the world's most biodiverse and productive systems, and the most important wetland on the Indian Ocean coast of Africa. It provides a wealth of ecosystem services vital to the food security and socio-economic development of more than 300,000 people. WWF has been supporting the conservation and management of the Zambezi delta for over a decade.



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* The Global Goals are still under development and the final wording may still change.

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Latin America moves on freshwater security

The Ramsar conference has approved the Mexican model of water reserves to secure the viability of freshwater ecosystems in the face of human impacts including climate change. The Mexican National Water Reserves Programme aims to establish 189 water reserves protecting Ramsar sites and 97 protected areas. The Ramsar resolution calls on all member countries to identify environmental flows to secure their wetlands.

More than 70 organisations - national and local government, business and organisations including WWF – agreed the Pantanal Pact in June to safeguard 700km of river systems in Brazil's State of Mato Grosso providing about a third of the water for the Pantanal floodplain, which supports important biodiversity and 3-million people.



© Santiago Gibert / WWF

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Calls to protect Mediterranean island wetlands

Hundreds of fragile island wetlands in the Mediterranean have been recognised for their biodiversity and human values and the need for protection. A decade of work by WWF in Greece which recorded over 800 wetlands on 75 islands has been taken up by the Ramsar conference in June that agreed a resolution identifying the Mediterranean as a biodiversity hotspot, with many large island groups, rich history and cultural values. The resolution calls for action to prevent the destruction of island wetlands and maintain their multiple values. In Greece, a presidential decree had earlier granted legal protection to 380 natural wetlands on 59 islands. WWF notes that while the resolution needs now to be implemented, this is a major victory for conservation of Mediterranean islands.



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Find out more: 

Climate change poses a fundamental threat to the places, species and communities WWF works to protect. Around the globe, climate change is already seriously affecting human communities, while wildlife and ecosystems are being forever changed. The far-reaching effects of climate change are evident: oceans are becoming more acidic, water supplies are shrinking, agricultural yields are dropping, and forests are burning.

But, there is still time to avoid the most severe consequences of climate change, by moving away from fossil fuels to a low carbon economy powered by renewable energy.

WWF's Global Goal: A global shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient future is achieved*.

France takes lead on shifting away from coal

In a world first, the French government has announced an immediate end to export credit support to all coal power plants without operational carbon capture and storage. This decision follows two years of intensive lobbying by many organizations, especially WWF and Friends of the Earth, and represents a significant gain, as France is one of the world's six largest coal supporters through providing export credits. This sets a global precedent that will help increase pressure on other countries. The determining factor was pressure due to the upcoming presidency of the year-end UN climate summit in Paris and the need to achieve an effective global climate deal that can avoid the worst consequences of climate change.



© Sandra Oboya / WWF Perú

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Record-breaking renewables growth increases jobs

Huge growth in renewable power capacity and employment in the renewable energy supply chain since 2014 shows renewable energy provides economic as well as environmental and other benefits. The **'REN21 Renewables 2015 Global Status Report'** found that 60 per cent of 2014 growth in global power capacity came from renewables such as wind, solar and hydro. This contributed to growth in the world's economy without a parallel rise in CO2 emissions for the first time in four decades. Jobs in the sector amounted to 8 million, said the **'IRENA 'Renewable Energy and Jobs Annual Review 2015'**. "Rapid spread of renewable energy is key to cutting carbon emissions and fighting climate change," said WWF. "It also produces jobs, and provides communities with affordable clean energy".



© Michel Gunther/WWF

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Energy efficiency platform launches in Latin America

Latin America's first Topten energy efficiency platform was launched in Chile in August, with support from WWF, enabling consumers to identify the most efficient products and appliances ranging from lightbulbs and lighting systems to air conditioners, freezers and cars. Reducing energy consumption is an important factor in combatting climate change and has the added value of reducing costs for purchasers of high efficiency products rated by Topten. The global Topten network started in Switzerland in 2000, and has expanded to China and 16 European countries, contributing to increased market share for energy efficient products and substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.



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Find out more: 

* The Global Goals are still under development and the final wording may still change.

While essential to human life and culture, food production, distribution, management and waste threaten wildlife and wild places on a massive scale. Today, 7.2 billion people consume 1.5 times what the Earth's natural resources can supply. By 2050, the world's population will reach 9 billion and the demand for food will double. The challenge is to produce enough food for more people without expanding the land and water already in use.

By improving efficiency and productivity while reducing waste and shifting consumption patterns, we can produce enough food for everyone by 2050 on roughly the same amount of land we use now.

WWF's Global Goal: Sustainable food systems conserve nature and maintain food security.*

Palm oil buyers to be rated on sustainability targets

WWF will issue the next International Palm Oil Buyers Scorecard in 2016 to assess progress by member companies of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) to purchase sustainably-certified palm oil. Several major brands committed to achieve 100 per cent sourcing of RSPO-certified palm oil by 2015, so this scorecard will identify whether these targets were met. To bring more transparency to the industry the scorecard will also look at international companies that have not yet made commitments and let consumers know which of their favourite brands are taking real steps to avoid deforestation from their supply chains. The RSPO standard requires producers to protect valuable forests and implement a comprehensive set of wider social and environmental safeguards.



© WWF / Richard Stonehouse

Find out more: 

Salmon producers report progress on sustainability

For the first time, a global food sector has collectively reported on its progress towards sustainability. At The Economist World Ocean Summit in Lisbon in June, the Global Salmon Initiative (GSI) announced details of member company and regional progress on industry-wide sustainability goals. The GSI was created with WWF support in 2013 to address the environmental damage caused by salmon farming and achieve 100 per cent Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) certification by 2020. The GSI Sustainability Dashboard covers the operations of 14 companies collectively producing around half the world's farmed salmon.



© WWF

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Sustainable shrimp gain for priority reef

In partnership with WWF, eight Belize shrimp farms in the priority Mesoamerican Reef set a global precedent by achieving Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) certification in a cluster that represents 90 per cent of the country's shrimp production. This certification adds 10,000 tonnes of sustainably produced shrimp to the marketplace and reduces a key threat to the Mesoamerican Reef due to implementation of better management practices especially improved wastewater treatment, with huge reductions in releases of nitrogen and phosphorus. Three additional farms have since asked to join the cluster, which will bring the country to 99 per cent of shrimp production certified to ASC standards.



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* The Global Goals are still under development and the final wording may still change.

WWF has identified three global drivers of change – Governance, Finance and Markets – that are fundamental to environmental degradation worldwide, and yet could also be powerful positive forces for sustainable development at scale. The stories here give examples of how WWF is helping make the drivers agents for sustainable development.

GOVERNANCE

UN approves new Sustainable Development Goals

In an historic moment, the UN has approved a new 15-year sustainable development deal which aims to eliminate poverty and inequality, achieve food, water and energy security and protect the environment. The WWF Network has long worked to make the environment central to this agreement. Several of the 17 new sustainable development goals (SDGs) explicitly focus on the environment including sustainable production and consumption, protection of freshwater, forest and marine biodiversity, and green cities. Climate change is recognised as a key threat to the environment and people, which must be addressed. The new deal will drive trillions of dollars to the SDGs, and help divert funding to sustainable development away from harmful ends such as fossil fuel subsidies.



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GOVERNANCE

Huge public demand to protect EU nature legislation

Over half a million people have called on the European Commission (EC) to save Europe's nature laws – by far the **largest response to a public consultation** in the history of the European Union (EU). In May, environmental organizations including WWF launched the 'Nature Alert' e-action campaign in response to the EC's ongoing 'fitness check' of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives, potentially undermining decades of European nature conservation. The campaign called both for retention and improved implementation of the laws which protect over 1,000 key species and 27,000 natural sites. The EU now hosts the world's largest network of protected areas, **Natura 2000**, covering almost a **fifth of the land area**. Keep following the campaign via: <http://www.wwf.eu/keepnaturealive/>



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Find out more:



GOVERNANCE

A strong climate deal needed for the Earth's future

The UN Climate Change Conference at the end of this year has an essential purpose: to achieve a legally-binding agreement on climate that can ensure a cut in emissions of greenhouse gases that will limit global temperature rise to avoid the worst consequences of climate change. The conference will be held in Paris 30 November to 11 December. WWF calls for an agreement that is equitable, with adequate financing to help especially developing countries with adaptation and mitigation, and above all which achieves a peak of emission in the next decade with sharp decline thereafter.



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FINANCE

New development funding framework agreed

A new international finance framework that integrates economic growth with sustainable development, environmental protection and social inclusion has been agreed in July in Ethiopia. Dubbed the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the accord mobilizes governments, private sector, and development partners to finance the new global sustainable development agenda. This is the first of three key agreements in 2015 that have great significance for the future of the planet – along with the UN sustainable development goals agreed in September and the upcoming climate summit in Paris at year end. WWF supported this process pushing for transparency and respect for human rights, and prioritization of low carbon climate resilient sustainable development solutions.



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FINANCE

WWF partners with African Development Bank

In partnership with the African Development Bank (AfDB), WWF has developed a report outlining how Africa can develop sustainably without undermining the natural resource base on which all development depends. The African Ecological Futures report was launched in May during the AfDB annual meeting which celebrated the Bank's 50th anniversary. WWF also took this opportunity to present the retiring AfDB President, Donald Kaberuka, with a Leaders for a Living Planet award in recognition of his leadership on environmental sustainability and the damage being caused by wildlife crime. WWF will work closely with the AfDB to incorporate the solutions in the report into development planning across Africa, especially infrastructure expansion and climate change impacts and adaptation.



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MARKETS

China moves towards sustainable paper production

A new initiative to reduce deforestation and promote sustainable pulp and paper production in China – the world's largest producer and consumer of paper products – has been launched by WWF with the China Forestry Industry Association. The 10 company members of the China Sustainable Paper Alliance (CSPA) represent the entire supply chain of China's pulp and paper industry and include China Paper, the country's biggest state-run paper company and Sun Paper, its biggest private paper company, as well as global producers such as Kimberley-Clark and buyers such as Xerox and IKEA. The CSPA aims to address deforestation and the shortage of timber in China. By putting the industry on to a sustainable footing, China can greatly influence the future of the world's forests.



© WWF-China

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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.

Pope Francis calls for action on climate change

The papal encyclical linking poverty, overconsumption and environmental destruction provides an unprecedented moral call to the world to act on behalf of future generations to prevent growing inequality and catastrophic climate change. Titled *"Laudato Si"*, or *"Praise be: On the care of our common home,"* the encyclical is a letter from Pope Francis to the 5,000 Catholic bishops and the 1,2 billion Catholics worldwide. The Pope will address the end of year climate summit in Paris which aims to agree a strong deal to address climate change. WWF International President Yolanda Kakabadse said Pope Francis' message adds a much needed moral approach to the climate debate, which is increasingly a moral and ethical issue.



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Sámi conservationist wins WWF award

WWF International President's Award has been presented to Isak Utsi, an advocate for the Sámi people and an enthusiastic environmental campaigner. Isak studies the language and culture of the Sámi, the indigenous community of northern Scandinavia, raises awareness of causes and mitigation of environmental threats such as mining and climate change and has represented the Sámi Parliament at the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The award recognizes outstanding leadership in conservationists under the age of thirty and enables WWF to celebrate individuals making a difference to sustainable development, highlighting them as inspirational role models.



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Progress towards huge new marine park recognized

In a presentation to the Sabah State Government, WWF has recognized major steps towards the creation of Malaysia's largest marine park with a Leaders for a Living Planet award. The proposed 1-million ha Tun Mustapha Park will protect one of the world's most biodiverse marine ecosystems within WWF's priority Coral Triangle ecoregion, encompassing 50 islands, and helping ensure the livelihoods and food security for 80,000 people living in the area. Fisheries and ecotourism are important economic activities which will be supported by the new park. In presenting the award to Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Haji Aman, WWF committed support to help achieve the conservation and sustainable management of the park's marine resources.



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WWF highlights in numbers

7th

The annual gross marine product makes the ocean the world's 7th biggest economy according to WWF report Reviving the Ocean Economy

17

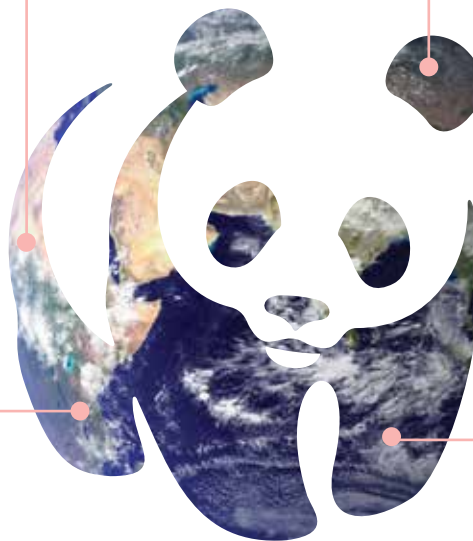
A total of 17 new sustainable development goals have been adopted by the UN as part of the new sustainable development plan to 2030

ZERO

For the third time since 2011, Nepal has achieved zero poaching of rhino, and rhino numbers have climbed to 645 animals

170M

Up to 170 million hectares of forest could be lost 2012-2030 in 11 deforestation fronts, mostly due to agricultural expansion



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.

panda.org

Conservation Highlights is produced bi-annually by Rob Soutter (rsoutter@wwfint.org) and Stéfane Mauris (smauris@wwfint.org) in WWF International's Communication and Marketing Division. WWF thanks the following virtual volunteers for their contributions: Dorcus Amaro, Rina Hertzl, Beatrice Jurskyt, Maryline Mangenot, Dannee McGuire, Maria Montzeglio, Libby Scanlan and Katie Stoppiello. Conservation Highlights can be found on One WWF and panda.org

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WWF International

Avenue du Mont-Blanc
1196 Gland, Switzerland

Tel : +41 22 364 9111

Fax : +41 22 364 8836

www.panda.org

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