



Conservation Highlights

May 2015

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. Earth Hour has since grown at a huge pace to become the world's largest mass participation environmental initiative, active in over 7,000 cities and 160 countries, and has gone 'beyond the hour' to become a platform where people are mobilising action on climate and other environmental priorities.

Earth Hour 2015 countdown begins

WWF's Earth Hour 2015 countdown began with the release of a video demonstrating how Earth Hour is empowering individuals and organisations around the world to take action. Showcasing memorable moments and achievements from past Earth Hours, plus statements from world leaders and personalities, the video inspires people with the message to act and 'use your power to change climate change'. Follow the links to see what is happening:

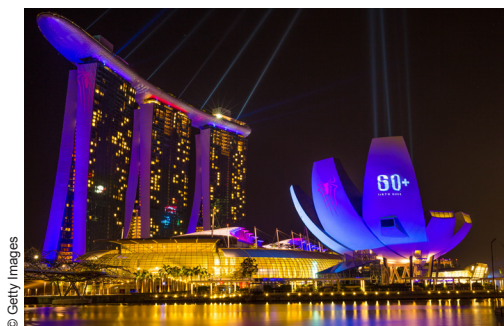
www.earthhour.org/tracker

Andy Murray backs WWF's Earth Hour

Andy Murray, Scottish professional tennis player and WWF UK global ambassador, has announced his backing for WWF's Earth Hour 'switch off' in 2015. Murray said: "WWF's Earth Hour is a simple but powerful idea. It's a global moment to show we care about our brilliant planet, and want to protect the amazing people and wildlife that depend on it." Now in its ninth year, WWF's Earth Hour unites millions of people in hundreds of countries for the world's biggest call to action against climate change.

Earth Hour takes on the climate challenge

In this critically important year for the planet's climate, as the world's governments meet in Paris at year end to agree a global climate deal that must avoid the worst consequences of climate change, Earth Hour has taken up the climate challenge – in the links below see UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon expressing his support. Earth Hour actions range from lobbying for access to renewable energy in Nepal, a ban on arctic oil exploitation in Russia, and stopping deforestation in Uganda; Renewable energy promotions in India and Colombia, and in education programmes in China and Sweden. And on the night events across the globe inspire people to use their power to change climate change. Results of Earth Hour 2015 will be featured in the next Conservation Highlights.




Find out more: 



Find out more: 



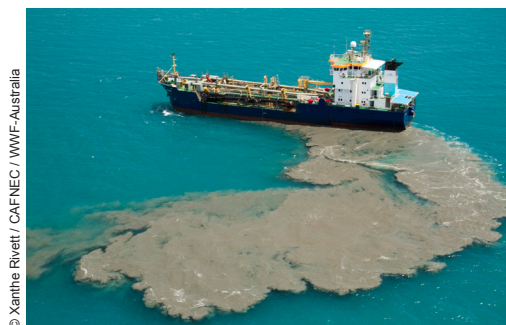
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WWF's Global Ocean Campaign aims to profile the importance of conserving marine habitats for food security, livelihoods and sustainable development, and to deliver policy and place-based marine conservation wins. The first campaign action is to save the Great Barrier Reef from the threat to dump seabed waste from dredging to expand ports within the GBR World Heritage Site.

“The Great Barrier Reef is one of the planet's richest ocean habitats, home to endangered species, a valuable economic asset for Australia, and a natural treasure for the whole world. Turning the reef into a dumping ground is the wrong choice for the environment and makes no business sense, particularly to build ports that are unnecessary,” said WWF-International Director General Marco Lambertini.

Save the iconic Great Barrier Reef

Reckless industrialization proposed alongside Australia's Great Barrier Reef (GBR) could cause severe damage according to a new WWF report. WWF is calling on the Australian Government to ban all dumping of dredged material within the GBR World Heritage Site. *The Great Barrier Reef Under Threat* report states that dumping of seabed ‘spoil’, dredged to expand ports in the heart of the reef, would have devastating impacts, smothering corals and threatening marine life. And the port expansion is unnecessary – existing terminals sit idle a third of the year. The report notes that many banks have backed away from financing coal terminals in the reef and WWF urges companies not to invest or participate in any project that could threaten the reef.



© Xanthe Rivett / CAFNEC / WWF-Australia

Find out more: 

Australia denies Great Barrier Reef's dire decline

An Australian Government report to UNESCO in January which portrays the Great Barrier Reef as being in good condition fails to acknowledge the serious decline of the health of the reef – despite evidence from the scientific community. The report is part of efforts by the government to persuade UNESCO not to list the Reef as a World Heritage Site in danger. Independent studies show decreases in marine species and a 50 per cent decline in coral cover, and the GBR Marine Park Authority describes the outlook for the Reef as “poor, has worsened since 2009, and expected to further deteriorate in the future”. WWF highlights the report's inaccuracies and its failure to provide a convincing plan for the restoration of the outstanding universal values of the reef.



© Jürgen Freund / WWF

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Support the petition against dumping waste on the Reef

WWF has reaffirmed its call for a full ban on waste dumping in the entire Great Barrier Reef (GBR) World Heritage Site, following the Australian Government's announcement in March that dumping within the smaller GBR Marine Park will be banned. In the past, the majority of waste has been dumped just outside the Marine Park, but within the World Heritage Site, smothering coral and seagrass beds. WWF also calls for the ban to be enacted before the UNESCO World Heritage Committee meets in June to consider adding the Reef to the List of World Heritage in Danger, to avoid this downgrading. Add your name to the 131,000 who have signed the petition to stop dumping on the Reef, and share WWF's call to action using #SOSreef



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Find out more: 

WWF is addressing a massive recent escalation in illegal killing and trade of rare and endangered species especially elephants, rhino and tiger. The aim is to persuade governments at the highest levels that wildlife crime is serious and must be addressed effectively and urgently for the sake of wildlife, their habitats, sustainable economic development and national security.


Asian countries commit to achieve zero poaching

Governments in Asia have committed to swift action to stamp out poaching at a landmark meeting on how to protect their wildlife. Thirteen countries attended the symposium Towards Zero Poaching in February in Nepal and agreed to key actions including improved cooperation and management, plus adoption of a zero poaching toolkit.

A fugitive Nepalese poacher has been extradited to Nepal after his arrest in Malaysia on an INTERPOL warrant, to face a 15-year sentence for rhino poaching and trafficking. Capture of Rajkumar Praja in January, two years after fleeing Nepal, is a highlight in the fight against wildlife crime - his criminal gang is thought responsible for killing 19 rhino in Chitwan National Park.



© WWF / James Morgan

Find out more:  

Summit agrees key actions to tackle wildlife crime

In an important advance in the battle against wildlife crime, a high level summit has agreed key new measures to help address the unprecedented surge in illegal wildlife trade, including tackling money laundering and corruption, and enabling local communities to benefit from wildlife. Heads of state, ministers and officials from 31 countries met in Botswana in March to review progress since the landmark London summit in 2014 which agreed urgent and decisive action to combat wildlife crime. Key recent successes include increased enforcement – especially in Africa resulting in major ivory seizures – improved legislation, and stronger sentences. The summit also supported proposals for a strong UN General Assembly resolution on wildlife crime.

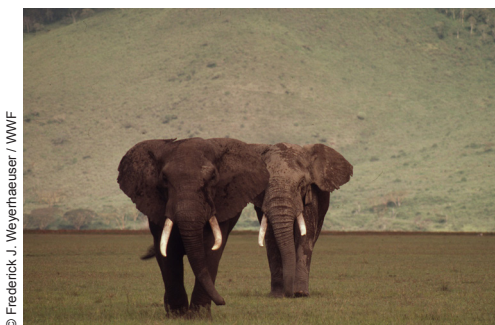


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Find out more: 

Campaign to reduce Thai ivory demand goes viral

Over a million people have participated in an anti-ivory campaign in Thailand that seeks to change consumer attitudes by focusing attention on the link between ivory and elephant poaching. Since the January launch of *Chor Chang Can Save Elephants* campaign, celebrities, artists, journalists, government officials and people from across the country have condemned the killing of elephants for ivory by symbolically removing the letter 'Chor Chang' – a common letter in the Thai alphabet similar to 'e for elephant' – from their names. Meanwhile, Thailand took steps to improve the legislation governing its domestic ivory market and extend protection to African elephants ahead of a March 31st deadline from CITES, the convention regulating trade in endangered species.



© Frederick J. Weyerhaeuser / WWF

Find out more: 

Oil exploration in Virunga remains a threat

The BBC reported in March that the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is seeking to alter the boundaries of Virunga National Park, a World Heritage Site, to allow oil exploration. UNESCO's World Heritage Committee holds a firm position that oil and gas are incompatible with World Heritage status. WWF urges the Committee to maintain its stance in protecting global treasures such as Virunga.

A documentary on Virunga National Park received an Oscar nomination in the best feature documentary category. Virunga portrays the tremendous challenges to conservation in Africa's oldest and most biodiverse national park, situated in the violence-torn eastern DRC – especially the fight to stop oil exploration in the park.



© Brent Stirton / Reportage by Getty Images / WWF



Find out more:  

Opposition increases to controversial Mekong dam

More than a quarter of a million people have signed a petition calling for a halt to a highly controversial dam in Laos on the Mekong River. The Don Sahong dam will block the only channel available for year-round fish migration in the Mekong, putting at risk the world's largest inland fishery on which 60 million people depend. And shock waves from explosives used in construction may endanger a population of critically endangered Irrawaddy dolphin close by. Together with local organisations, WWF is calling for an independent, science-based assessment of social and environmental impacts, and evaluation against more sustainable alternatives.



© WWF-Cambodia

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Efforts underway to save endangered porpoises

The Mexican government has announced measures to protect the vaquita, the world's smallest porpoise, living in the northern Gulf of California, where fewer than 100 individuals survive. Gillnets, used for fishing shrimp, will be phased out and an annual US\$36 million provided to compensate fishers for lost income and boost conservation efforts. WWF has worked with local partners to save the vaquita – Spanish for 'little cow' – for more than 15 years, promoting alternatives to gillnets.

Four critically endangered Yangtze finless porpoise were translocated 400km to a secure oxbow lake to create a new breeding population, while four others were moved to boost genetic diversity of an existing population.



© Thomas A. Jefferson

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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. Now we are seeing the results.

Report finds India's tigers are roaring back

A new survey announcing significant increases in India's Bengal tiger population shows recent intensive conservation efforts are working: tigers have increased from 1,411 in 2006 to 2,226 in 2014. The survey, published in February by India's National Tiger Conservation Authority, attributes success to improved management and protection of tiger reserves and protected areas, maintaining undisturbed core habitats for breeding tiger populations, habitat connectivity, and protection of tigers and their prey from poaching. Poaching remains the greatest threat to tigers with their parts in high demand throughout Asia. As half the world's tigers are in India, this growth in numbers is a true conservation success and proves the value of concerted conservation efforts.



© Martin Harvey / WWF


Find out more: 

Video gives hope for restoring tigers to China

A rare video taken of a tigress and her cubs shows that wild Amur tigers are returning to China. The video, captured by a WWF camera trap 30km from the Russian border, is the first footage of Amur tigers so far into China. The video is a highlight of decades of conservation work aimed at establishing a breeding Amur tiger population in China. With the Chinese authorities, WWF identified the border area with Russia as a priority zone for tigers. Conservation work has included reintroduction of tiger prey and maintenance of forested corridors that allow China's tiger population to move freely. The Amur tiger population is estimated at 400 individuals, with most living in Russia and at least 18-20 adult individuals in the area along the Russia-China border.



© Vladimir Filonov / WWF


Find out more: 

Road plans threaten Cambodia tiger reintroduction

WWF has called for the cancellation of a planned road that would cut through 36km of Cambodia's Monduliri Protected Forest. The forest is the proposed site for reintroduction of tigers, which would strengthen tiger conservation efforts and have major potential for tourism and long-term revenue to local communities and the provincial government. The proposed road would not improve access to existing villages, would also degrade tiger habitat and allow poachers into parts of the forest previously inaccessible. Monduliri Protected Forest protects some of Southeast Asia's most threatened species including the giant Ibis, the national bird of Cambodia, as well as the Asian elephant, banteng, and leopard.



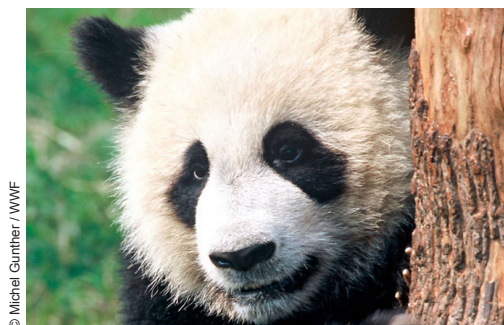
© Nick Cox / WWF-Greater Mekong Programme

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.

New survey shows increase in wild panda numbers

The global population of wild giant pandas, found only in southwest China, now stands at 1,864 – an increase of 268 over the last decade. A new survey by China's State Forest Administration (SFA), also shows the pandas' range has expanded by almost 12 per cent to 2,57 million ha since 2003. WWF welcomes this news which shows the value of establishing panda nature reserves to protect panda habitat and benefit other threatened species, and secure the forested areas vital to maintain the watersheds that service the Yangtze River. More than two-thirds of the wild pandas are found in 67 protected areas created for pandas – an increase of 27 since the last survey. WWF works with the SFA to establish ecological corridors to link isolated panda populations.



© Michel Gunther / WWF

Find out more: 



Recovery of threatened wildlife

The number of Amur leopards, considered the world's rarest wild cat, has more than doubled over the past seven years. From just 30 counted in 2007, new data from 10,000 photographs taken by camera traps across 500,000 hectares shows at least 57 leopards in Russia's Land of the Leopard National Park, which includes all known leopard breeding areas as well as important tiger numbers. Next steps include creation of a China-Russia transboundary nature reserve.

The population of the endangered Mongolian saiga antelope has increased more than fourfold – from 2,950 in 1998 to 13,000 in 2014. Since the near extinction of the saiga in the late 1980s, WWF has worked to conserve the antelope.



© WWF-Russia / ISUNR

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Celebrating the Mekong on World Wetlands Day

On 2 February, World Wetlands Day, WWF celebrated the Mekong River and highlighted its efforts to ensure it remains plentiful and healthy. The Mekong is home to a wide array of wildlife, including many rare and threatened species. It also plays a crucial role in providing rice to 300 million people, and the inland fishery makes up 25 percent of the global freshwater catch. However, the region's emerging economies are turning to hydropower as a source of cheap energy, and 11 planned dams are threatening the Mekong's water flows. WWF helps identify hydropower projects that are sustainable, and educates and assists communities to manage fisheries and develop ecotourism to ensure the Mekong continues to sustain humans and wildlife.



© Zeb Hogan / WWF

Protecting wetlands in Central and Eastern Europe

WWF has helped achieved several freshwater successes in the Danube-Carpathian region of central Europe in 2014, including wetland restoration, prevention of damaging hydropower schemes, and efforts to save the sturgeon from extinction. WWF aims to ensure 2 million hectares of freshwater ecosystems along the Danube and its tributaries are healthy and sustainably managed by 2025, securing clean water, flood protection and increased climate change resilience. With WWF's help, guidelines for sustainable hydropower are now being implemented across the region, more than 500 damaging small hydro schemes in Ukraine have been stopped, sturgeon spawning sites in Bulgaria have been identified for protection, and seizures of illegally caught sturgeon have been made.



© Anton Vrauer / WWF

WWF urges Spain and the EU to protect Doñana

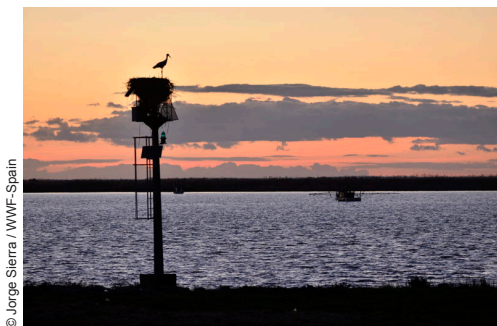
WWF urges the Spanish government and the European Commission to protect Coto Doñana, one of the most important wetlands in Europe, from gas exploitation. Doñana, a UNESCO World Heritage Site also protected under the Ramsar Convention, is vital for millions of migratory birds which use the wetland as a stopover each year. Energy company Gas Natural-Fenosa threatens to claim €358 million from the Andalusian regional government unless it gets authorisation to develop infrastructure within the protected area. WWF is asking the European Commission and the Spanish government to thoroughly evaluate the environmental and security risks of the project and save Doñana. You can help too: sign the online petition today!



© Jorge Sierra / WWF-Spain

Court victory saves historic Doñana National Park

Following a 15 year battle, Spain's Supreme Court has ruled against plans to dredge a new shipping channel in Doñana National Park, one of the most important wetlands in Europe. The new channel would have flanked the Guadalquivir River, that runs through the park for 90 km. A coalition of conservationists, farmers and fishermen opposed the plan because of its negative impacts on the river and on the park. The Spanish Supreme Court agreed that the dredging would have caused modifications or alterations to the Guadalquivir Estuary, damaging the natural park. Protected under multiple designations, Doñana provides shelter to over six million migratory birds and highly endangered species such as the Iberian lynx and the imperial eagle.




© Jorge Sierra / WWF-Spain

Find out more: 

Find out more: 

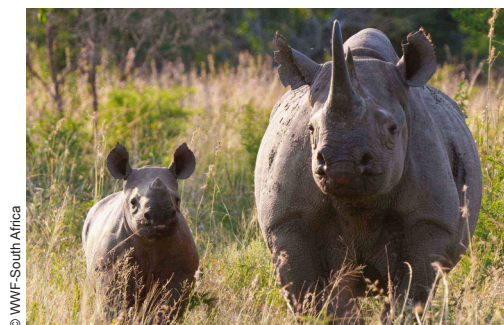
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Find out more: 

South Africa battles rhino killers

Aggressive poaching by organized crime syndicates continues the toll of South Africa's rhino as official figures show 1,215 rhinos were killed in 2014 – a 21 per cent increase from 2013. South Africa is home to around 80 per cent of the global rhino population. WWF commended the efforts of the rangers risking their lives to protect rhino, as well as the government, who reported 386 arrests in rhino related crimes.

More than 300 rhino are being relocated to safer areas to better protect them from poachers, according to local authorities. The rhino, from the Kruger National Park, the site of most poaching, are being relocated to safer areas within the park, or sent to neighbouring countries.



© WWF-South Africa


Find out more: 

Last Ice Area may provide refuge for polar bears

In Canada's Arctic Archipelago – home to 25 per cent of the global polar bear population – major decreases in polar bear numbers are predicted due to climate change and loss of sea ice. In research published in the journal PLOS One, assisted by WWF, climate change impacts may lead to starvation and breeding failure among polar bears in the region which includes Ellesmere and Baffin islands. A fringe of ice around northern Canada and Greenland – called the Last Ice Area – may provide a refuge for ice-adapted life. WWF is working with local communities and organisations in areas where sea ice is expected to persist to find ways of gaining protection for ice-dependent species, such as polar bears and seals, and to secure a viable future for human communities in the region.



© naturepl.com / Steven Kazlowski / WWF

Find out more:  

Drop in polar bear numbers reported

News of a large decrease in polar bear numbers at the edge of their range in the Beaufort Sea, shared by Canada and US, underline fears for this ice-dependent species in the face of rapid climate change. Polar bear numbers declined by close to 40 per cent, from 1,500 to 900 bears between 2001 and 2010. The decrease is linked to an unprecedented loss of sea ice due to climate change, which reduces polar bears' access to the seals that are their primary food.

Use the link to follow individual polar bears in their journeys across the Arctic. Information is beamed up via satellite from polar bears fitted with radio collars, enabling researchers to identify their range and how they may be affected by climate change.



© Howard Buffett / WWF-US

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.

EU issues warning on illegal fishing

The European Commission has issued warnings to four states for failing to comply with strict new EU fisheries rules aimed at combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing – a major cause of overfishing, and a key WWF priority. The four states, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Vincent & Grenadines, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu, bring to 17 the number of states warned to comply with the new rules or face sanctions, including a ban on exporting fish to the EU, if no remedial action is taken within 6 months. IUU fishing – estimated to cost between €8 and €19 billion annually, representing 11 to 26 million tonnes of catch – depletes fish stocks, damages marine ecosystems, penalizes legitimate fishers and jeopardizes the livelihoods of vulnerable communities.




Find out more: 

Spain announces law to fight pirate fishing

Spain has launched an investigation into pirate fishing – known as illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing – which evades efforts to achieve sustainability in the world's fisheries. Together with several other organizations, WWF applauds this first use of Spain's new fisheries law, which is also the first to link to the EU's regulations to stop IUU fishing, and keep illegally-caught fish out of the EU market. Spain is Europe's largest fishing country, with 20 per cent of EU fishing capacity, and biggest importer and exporter of fish products, making this action against IUU fishing highly significant if effectively implemented. With the other organizations WWF calls on other EU States to approve similar laws to more effectively fight illegal fishing globally.




Find out more: 

WWF calls for action to save Pacific tuna fisheries

The two Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) that manage the important tuna fisheries of the western, central and eastern Pacific recently acted to try and save the north Pacific bluefin tuna, which is near total collapse, but ignored warnings that bigeye and yellowfin tuna could soon follow. Skipjack and albacore tuna fisheries in the region also face overfishing. The two commissions, IATTC and WCPFC, agreed to halve catch quotas for north Pacific bluefin tuna – a fish stock that has crashed to 4 per cent of historic levels. However, such steps have come too late and may not prevent further overfishing as there are indications of further declines. WWF calls for stronger efforts to conserve and manage the various tuna stocks in the Pacific.



Find out more: 

Sustainable seafood increasingly on the menu

Demand for sustainable seafood is increasing around the world, and consumers say supermarkets and restaurants can play a key support role by ensuring the sustainability of the seafood they are selling, according to a major survey ranked as the world's largest international survey of sustainable seafood consumption. An independent report commissioned by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) questioned 9,000 people in 15 countries across Asia, Europe and North America, and found a third of people recognised the MSC ecolabel, now carried on 25,000 seafood products available in 100 countries. The retail value of MSC seafood reached US\$4.8 billion in 2013/14 – an increase of almost 150 per cent since 2010. To date, 252 fisheries are certified representing 9 per cent of the total wild catch.



Find out more: 

Asia's first shrimp farm certified as sustainable

Vietnamese shrimp farm Quoc Viet is Asia's first shrimp farm to be certified by the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC). The leading global programme for responsibly farmed seafood, ASC sets standards for sustainability especially in protecting wetland and mangrove habitats, and reducing pollution. Vietnam is the world's third largest shrimp exporter, and Quoc Viet one of Vietnam's biggest shrimp farming operations, which aims to produce 25,000 tonnes of shrimp in 2015. Certification will enable Quoc Viet to expand to new markets, especially European customers that demand responsibly produced seafood. WWF helps producers and small-scale farmers meet ASC standards and puts them in contact with companies that value certification.




Find out more: 

Major gains for marine species conservation

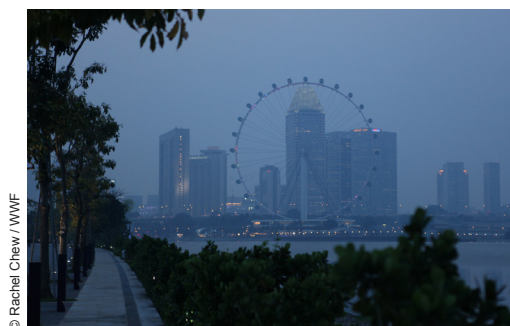
Twenty-one species of shark and ray have received international protection, extending recent marine conservation victories. Meeting in Ecuador in November, the 120 member countries of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) committed to protect the reef manta, nine varieties of devil ray, and five types of sawfish. It was also agreed to conserve all three species of thresher shark, two types of hammerhead, and the silky shark. The move follows regulations being agreed on seven threatened species of shark and ray under CITES, the Convention regulating trade in endangered species. "Manta and devil rays are exceptionally vulnerable to overexploitation, usually having only one pup every few years," said WWF's Ian Campbell.



Find out more: 

Singapore calls on consumers to help tackle the haze

Edited comments by WWF-Singapore CEO Elaine Tan: The haze in Singapore – which hit hazardous levels in 2013 costing the economy US\$1 billion a week – will get worse if plantation owners in Sumatra and Borneo continue burning forests as a cheap, fast way to make room for palm oil and pulp and paper production. The Singapore government recently agreed to fine companies causing transboundary haze pollution. While encouraging, it is not enough. Consumers can help by asking favourite retailers and brands to adopt sustainable practices in producing daily products, and urge producers to adopt certified sustainable palm oil (CSPO) certification. WWF promotes CSPO certification with plantation owners and businesses, and protection of forests with high biodiversity value.



© Rachel Chew / WWF

Find out more: 

Sustainable palm oil body to expel non-compliers

The international body aiming to reduce the environmental damage caused by palm oil production, the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), has announced that member companies failing to keep commitments to meet sustainability targets will be expelled. The RSPO aims to transform palm oil production to be sustainable through independent third-party certification of best practice – to date 18 per cent of global supply is RSPO-certified, but progress is hampered by RSPO member companies not meeting their commitments to purchase certified palm oil. WWF works with companies to promote responsible palm oil, through the RSPO, and the Palm Oil Innovation Group which seeks ways to reduce carbon emissions, and protect wildlife and habitats.



© naturepl.com/Juan Carlos Munoz / WWF

Find out more: 

FSC strengthens role in responsible forestry

Protection of important intact forest landscapes has been agreed by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), the international body which promotes responsible forest management across the world's forests. Intact forest landscapes are large enough – at greater than 50,000 ha and unbroken by roads or economic activities – to maintain biodiversity, are critical to indigenous and forest-dependent people, and store vast quantities of carbon. Proposed by WWF at the FSC General Assembly, in September, this decision strengthens FSC's role in responsible forest management. The FSC decision was strongly supported by indigenous peoples' representatives, and also by major forest product companies.



© Kerry Cesario / WWF-US

Find out more: 

IKEA's 2015 catalogue printed with FSC paper

The IKEA 2015 catalogue is the world's largest print production ever to be printed entirely on paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). This means the entire IKEA catalogue production chain from forest to printer is FSC-certified to help ensure the wood is sustainably produced. In 2014, 217 million copies of the IKEA catalogue were printed in 32 languages. IKEA is also using the catalogue to inform customers that FSC stands for responsible wood products from well-managed forests. The huge scale of IKEA's commitment to FSC will result in increased demand for sustainable wood, which WWF hopes will lead to better exploitation practices globally. Currently, 14 per cent of the world's production forests are FSC-certified.



© IKEA

Find out more: 

Congo forest concession receives FSC certification

The largest contiguous forest concession in the tropics has been certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). The 1,16 million ha concession, run by Industrie Forestière d'Ouessou (IFO), a subsidiary of hardwood company Danzer in the Republic of Congo, brings the total FSC-certified area in the Congo Basin to 4.8 million hectares – representing about 10 per cent of all logging concessions in the region. FSC certification is the most credible system for achieving sustainable forest management, and helps companies meet EU timber rules aimed at preventing import of illegal timber. WWF applauds Danzer's commitment to achieve certification, and encourages companies in the region to follow IFO's good example and certify their operations with the FSC.



© Daniel Tiveau/WWF Green Heart of Africa

Find out more: 

Ongoing efforts to support Dzanga Sangha wildlife

The 4,4 million ha Dzanga-Sangha Protected Area complex in the Central African Republic shows promising signs of recovery, two years after the effects of civil war. In May 2013, 26 elephants were killed by poachers, and indiscriminate use of snares to catch bushmeat remains a widespread problem. However, swift actions of anti-poaching teams and neighbouring communities, alerting authorities to suspected poachers, is improving security in the area. WWF has helped train anti-poaching teams, and elephant poaching is now rare. Tourists are returning, along with hopes that increased tourism will drastically reduce wildlife crime, as local communities benefit from 40 per cent of park fees which go to development projects.



© Siriziana-Maria Demian/WWF

Find out more: 

Conservation methods support sustainable food production

A partnership between the international development NGO CARE and WWF is helping communities living in and around Mozambique's Primeiras & Segundas protected area use conservation methods to improve crop yields and fish catches. Challenges facing these impoverished communities range from failure of cash crops and unemployment, to lower food crop yields, drought and floods due to climate change. The aim is to achieve sustainable food crops and fisheries, and multiply this through advocacy. After three years of trials, cassava harvests are four times larger and no-take fishing zones help increase fish catches. Most important these and neighbouring communities are keen to adopt conservation methods: The fishers are calling for more no-take zones which they manage themselves.



© James Morgan / WWF-US

Find out more: 

Climate talks waste opportunities as planet heats

Critical of the failure of the UN climate talks in Peru to deliver concrete, science-based plans to combat climate change, a frank statement from Samantha Smith, leader of WWF's climate team, said the talks had failed to agree 2020 targets for emission cuts, lacked clarity on funding sources and overlooked vulnerable countries. Delaying action till 2020 will make it near impossible to avoid the worst climate change impacts – yet political expediency won over scientific urgency, she said. Smith urged governments to use upcoming June G7 and UN summits as opportunities to define actions and financing for the next five years. WWF continues to work with society groups, governments and companies to urgently address climate change both within and outside the UN process.



Find out more: 

US\$10 billion pledged to the Green Climate Fund

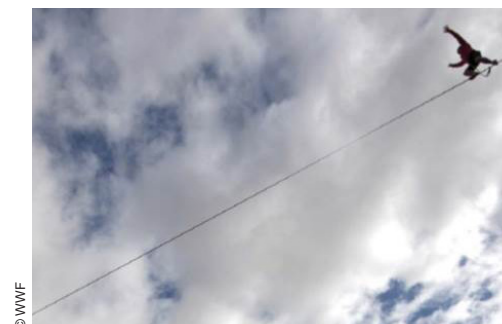
Contributions of US\$10.2 billion was pledged to the Green Climate Fund for use by developing countries over 4 years to address climate change challenges, both in reducing carbon emissions and coping with impacts. Announced ahead of the Peru climate summit in November, this first “seed funding” is for WWF “a significant beginning”, enabling the Fund to start operating and the contributions by developing countries such as Peru, Indonesia, Panama and Mexico are particularly encouraging. The Fund is a financial mechanism created under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and will help encourage developing countries to fix ambitious goals to address Climate change issues. Additional contributions are expected through the GCF and other channels to reach the US\$100 billion goal by 2020.



Find out more: 

Practical steps to achieve the emissions cuts needed

A new WWF report shows how immediate mitigation measures can be taken in the next 5 years to significantly reduce carbon emissions. Released in February ahead of a climate summit in Switzerland, the report, *Crossing the Divide: How to close the Emissions Abyss* identifies actions that can be taken in 10 key countries that can help ensure emissions peak within the pre-2020 period as concluded by the latest report by the Intergovernmental panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to avoid the worst consequences of climate change. Actions include scrapping coal-fired power stations, increasing renewables, improving energy efficiency, strengthening emissions targets and addressing deforestation.



Find out more: 

Bright future dawns for renewable energy

India has announced major new commitments on renewable energy, including the world's largest solar power plant to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. Ahead of the Peru climate summit in November, India committed to double the share of renewable energy from 6 to 15 per cent of its electricity mix by 2020, and aims to create a solar programme with 100GW capacity.

A WWF report predicts a bright future for renewable energy in Latin America based on progress in exploiting natural resources. Green Energy Leaders cites Costa Rica's target of 100 per cent renewable power by 2021, and Brazil's expanding wind energy sector successfully contributing to the region's status as a clean energy technology hub.



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World's largest home developer is Climate Saver

China Vanke Co Ltd, a developer of homes in 30 Chinese cities, has committed to reduce harmful CO₂ emissions by becoming a WWF Climate Saver. The initiative encourages companies such as Volvo, HP and Coca-Cola to reduce greenhouse gases, and its 30 savers have reduced emissions by 100 million tonnes since 1999. Vanke, the world's largest residential developer, will support the transformation of Chinese cities to low-carbon development, through green buildings, solar heating and sharing technology. Climate Savers shows it is possible to achieve business growth and reduce carbon at the same time, while also saving millions of dollars, and encourages companies to lead low-carbon transformations in their industries.



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Arctic sea ice at record low

Arctic sea ice shrank to the lowest winter extent ever recorded, and follows earlier news that 2014 was the warmest year since record keeping began. This record, announced in March by the US National Snow and Ice Data Centre, is an urgent wakeup call says Samantha Smith, leader of WWF's climate team. "Unless we make dramatic cuts in polluting gases we will end up with a climate that is unrecognizable, unpredictable and damaging for natural systems and people," she said. A recent study showed sea ice has thinned by 65 per cent since 1975. WWF is working with governments, communities and other organisations to identify and protect regions where sea ice is predicted to last longest, to give the best chance for ice-dependent species such as the polar bear.



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Jared Leto becomes WWF Global Ambassador

Academy Award-winning actor, musician and director Jared Leto has agreed to become a WWF Global Ambassador and to focus attention on urgent environmental issues facing our planet. He participated recently in a WWF-supported project to protect rhino in South Africa – where 1,215 rhino were illegally killed in 2014, an increasingly high toll in the last five years. Mr Leto said he is committed and passionate about ensuring the survival of these and other endangered species, noting the deep connection we have with nature. “We must join together and protect these powerful but extremely vulnerable animals from senseless slaughter,” he said. “I’m honoured to join with WWF and the global conservation community and do my part. I hope you will too”.



© Jennifer Bonello / WWF-US

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WWF champion completes Antarctic swim challenge

Famed extreme swimmer Lewis Pugh has swum 5km in the seas around Antarctica to raise awareness and support for efforts to make the Ross Sea a Marine Protected Area. In February, he completed his challenge as a WWF champion to become the first person to swim in five of the southern-most waters in the world, wearing only his uninsulated swimming briefs. Lewis and WWF are together calling on the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) to designate a network of Marine Protected Areas around Antarctica. This action would help protect 1.34 million km of the Ross Sea, whilst safeguarding the future of some of the most pristine and least understood ecosystems and species on the planet.

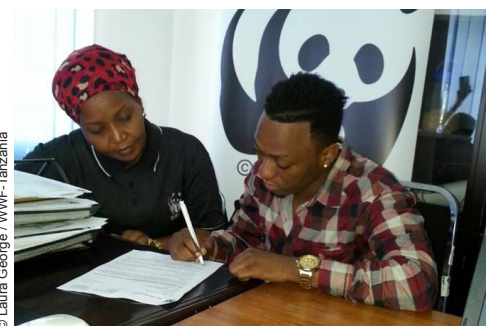


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Top African musician supports renewable energy

Tanzanian musician Richard (Rich) Mavoko is the new champion for WWF's Solar for Education (S4E) campaign, an initiative to demonstrate how renewable energy solutions can provide opportunities to advance socio-economic transformation in Africa. Only 15 per cent of Tanzania's estimated 50 million people have access to electricity and mainly use kerosene which is a health hazard. Without action, the number of people across Africa without access to electricity is expected to grow to 600 million by 2030. Rich Mavoko will use his links to popular culture especially youth to raise awareness, help promote access to renewable energy such as solar power, and show how this can support development – especially education – efforts across the continent.



© Laura George / WWF-Tanzania


Find out more: 

UN appoints WWF conservation leader as climate adviser

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has appointed Janos Pasztor as UN's senior climate advisor. Pasztor, WWF Acting Executive Director for Conservation, will support Ban Ki-moon's efforts to reach an agreement at the Paris climate conference in December. He will also focus on mobilizing global climate action on the ground. WWF International congratulates Janos on his appointment, which comes at an essential time for global climate negotiations. The Paris conference agreement, which aims to avert the worst consequences of climate change, will be key to ensure global temperatures stay below the dangerous threshold of a 2°C increase.



© WWF / Konstantin Ivanov

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Environment is key focus in new development goals

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is calling on countries to place the environment at the centre of new global development goals. His November 2014 report, the Road to Dignity by 2030, guides governments to include the environment alongside goals for poverty eradication and the economy in a new development deal. Early in 2014, negotiators drafted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to guide global development over the next 15 years, which will also prioritise investment in sustainable development. When finalised, the SDGs will replace the Millennium Development Goals, which expire in 2015. “The environment can no longer be seen as a separate factor when discussing development and poverty,” said Marco Lambertini, Director General of WWF International.



© UN Photo / Evan Schneider

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Resolution approved to protect wetlands worldwide

A global action plan to secure the water sources of important wetlands will be discussed at the summit of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance in Uruguay in June. Proposed by the Mexican Government this initiative is based on Mexico's Water Reserves Programme which protects the water sources of all the country's protected areas and Ramsar wetlands to ensure the future viability of these areas to 2050 and beyond. These commitments are built into Mexico's National Development Plan and Climate Programme, as healthy wetlands are a key defence against climate change impacts. More than 2,000 sites covering over 200 million ha are registered as Ramsar sites worldwide.



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A crucial 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 less than 2°C above pre-industrial levels and 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.



© Rebecca Greenfield / WWF

WWF highlights in numbers

1,864

The total population of giant pandas – WWF's iconic symbol – has risen to 1,864 due to intensive conservation efforts

60M

The number of people in the Mekong River basin reliant on the fish caught from the world's largest inland fishery now threatened by a controversial dam in Laos is 60 million

2°C

WWF is working to ensure the world's governments agree a global climate deal at end year that keeps global temperature increase to less than 2°C

US\$5.8BN

Activities involving the highly threatened Great Barrier Reef generate US\$5,8 billion annually for the Australian economy



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

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