



## A CALL TO ACTION

It is biological diversity that gives resilience to ecosystems.<sup>1</sup> But today thousands of species are now formally recognised as threatened or endangered.<sup>2</sup> Of the estimated eight million species on Earth around one million face extinction in the next few decades<sup>3</sup> - the vast majority because of human actions. Worldwide we are daily destroying natural habitats and spraying them with toxins.<sup>1</sup> We have forgotten that when the number of species is significantly reduced the physical structure of terrestrial habitats across the world will collapse and with them the diverse flora and fauna that maintains the world as we know it.<sup>1</sup>

"A massive destruction of the biological richness of Earth."<sup>4</sup>



But we can still prevent this biodiversity crisis. Humanity can "*rise above profit and greed*"<sup>4</sup> and make fundamental changes to how we relate to Nature - then take urgent action to save it. Because if we don't...

"The extinction of much of the Earth biota cannot be avoided."<sup>2</sup>

There is hope - we still have time to replant forests and meadows and encourage the remaining wild birds and insects.<sup>5</sup> As individuals we can all play our part in helping local wildlife - by creating wild areas or digging small ponds in our gardens - but only national governments and local communities working together on well-planned conservation projects can create landscapes on the large scale required to save wildlife.<sup>6</sup>

**"Protecting, improving, extending and connecting wild places for nature across the UK can bring benefit for wild life."<sup>6</sup>**

Britain has a long heritage of establishing sites to protect wildlife. The first was founded in 1821 at Walton Hall in West Yorkshire. Today the United Kingdom (UK) has a range of sites that cover around 2% of the land area. Designated sites, such as Special Protection Areas, cover a further 10%. However, this still falls short of the global target of at least 17% of land area under protection.<sup>6</sup>

But even this may not be enough to counter centuries of habitat destruction and the continuing loss of Nature across the UK. Studies of almost 4,000 terrestrial and freshwater species between 1970 and 2013 found population declines in 56% of species.<sup>6</sup> What's worse - of nearly 8,000 species assessed 15% are extinct or threatened with extinction.<sup>6</sup> It is obvious that small fragmented reserves are proving insufficient to save Nature's diversity or abundance.

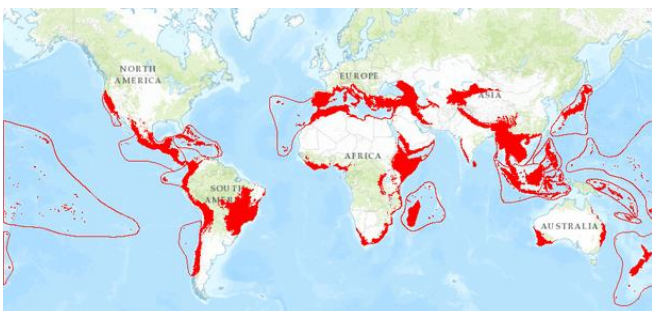


Cley Marshes: Norfolk Wildlife Trust

In the UK we need to restore degraded areas and recreate new habitat including a wide range of wetlands, meadows and woodland. Significant investment is required for nationwide tree planting and to re-flood marshlands.

**"Conserve biodiversity by establishing natural area preserves."**<sup>7</sup>

Internationally we need global agreements to protect and restore environments for the benefit of wildlife. This should include the creation of new nature reserves - vast regions free from all human activity - selected to protect examples of the widest possible range of native ecosystems and habitats.<sup>6</sup>



**"Many of the challenges facing our wildlife...cannot be addressed with...habitat or species focus alone."**<sup>6</sup>

The restoration of habitat and the creation of reserves can play an important role but ultimately it is of little use if the destruction is not stopped. The only alternative to the prospect of a *"dead planet"* is to fundamentally reduce those human activities which cause harm to the environment by making transformative changes to the economic and industrial systems that now dominate the world.<sup>5</sup> Global legislation is required to stop industrial agriculture and logging.<sup>8</sup> Also to effect a total elimination of pesticides, herbicides and all other forms of pollution.<sup>6</sup> This - and much more - is required if we are to preserve valuable habitats and prevent the extinction of tens of thousands of living species.<sup>8</sup>

**"Industrial civilization is killing the planet."**<sup>5</sup>

This is a call to action. There is important work to be done to stop the destruction and actively restore life on Earth.<sup>8</sup> Together we need to act to transform the economic and political system which is based on an extractive industrial system and wasteful mass consumerism. A vast amount of public pressure will be required to force the required institutional change and *"destroy the industrial economy that is destroying life on Earth."*<sup>5</sup>



Priors Wood: Avon Wildlife Trust

"We have...to save Nature."<sup>6</sup>

It will be a project that will take decades - but surely it is better to be remembered as the generation that started the process of restoring life to the Earth than the generation that killed it - permanently.

*Dean*

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- 5...Jensen.D (2012)  
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