

# FOR ALL LIFE ON EARTH

Actions to protect, restore  
and sustainably use nature

A practical guide in support of  
the Kunming-Montreal Global  
Biodiversity Framework

UN   
environment  
programme



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



Kunming-Montreal  
**GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK**

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# SECURING OUR WEB OF LIFE



*The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework is our global plan to repair this web and sustain all life on Earth, including ours. With only seven years to implement the framework, we must all act now. And we must continue to act until our web of life is secure.*

**- Inger Andersen, Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme, said at the Framework's adoption in 2023<sup>1</sup>.**



*Biodiversity is the potential of food diversity in the future. Biodiversity is what we farm, catch, harvest and cultivate. It is what supports our food networks from pollinators to micro-organisms in our soils. It is what prospers livelihoods of farmers, forest managers and dwellers, fishers, livestock keepers and pastoralists across the world.*

**- Qu Dongyu, Director General, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations<sup>2</sup>.**

Our world faces environmental crises that threaten to upend life as we know it. Earth is degraded, deforested and warming dangerously. Nature and the myriad of benefits that it provides to people is declining all around the world<sup>3</sup>. Poor people and traditional societies, especially in rural areas of developing countries, are particularly vulnerable to its loss<sup>4</sup>.

Sustaining and restoring nature is an urgent necessity. It is also common sense. Healthy ecosystems provide our food and water and underpin our prosperity and well-being. Ecosystems shield us from hunger, drought, disease and climate catastrophe. Furthermore, they are key to realizing the rights and hopes of people everywhere to live a good life, protect their culture and lay a firm foundation for future generations.

We should work with nature—not against it—to continue to enjoy its benefits and ensure a healthy future for us all. Our growing understanding of how the planet works means that we also know how to fix it. But transforming our relationship with nature requires big changes, including in government policies, the production and consumption of goods and services, and individual behaviour<sup>5</sup>.

This practical guide presents some of the most important actions that individuals and organizations can take to collectively achieve the goal to transform our relationship with nature.



✓ **Biodiversity is declining faster than ever before<sup>3</sup>.**

 A circular inset image showing a humpback whale breaching the ocean surface. A vertical credit line on the right side reads "Photo: Thomas Kelley".

✓ **Monitored wildlife populations are down by an average of 69% since 1970<sup>6</sup>.**

 A circular inset image showing a close-up of a Galapagos tortoise's head. A vertical credit line on the right side reads "Photo: Fotogrin".

✓ **About 1 million species risk extinction<sup>3</sup>.**

 A circular inset image showing a large group of monarch butterflies. A vertical credit line on the right side reads "Photo: Alex Guillaume".

✓ **Over half the world's total GDP is moderately or highly dependent on nature<sup>7</sup>.**

 A circular inset image showing a hummingbird perched on a yellow flower. A vertical credit line on the right side reads "Photo: Jeremy Hines".

*The natural world is changing. And we are totally dependent on that world. It provides our food, water and air. It is the most precious thing we have, and we need to defend it.*

- Sir David Attenborough<sup>8</sup>.

## 🌐 A global plan of action

Securing nature and our future requires action at every level, from personal to global. To guide our collective efforts, in December 2022, 196 governments around the world adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework – also known as the GBF.\*

Hailed as a “Paris Agreement for nature”, the GBF lays out the actions to halt and reverse the loss of nature by 2030. It sets 23 targets to be achieved by 2030, alongside four goals for 2050, which are aimed around reducing threats to biodiversity, promoting its sustainable use, sharing the benefits of genetic resources and financing this urgent transformation. The ultimate objective is a world where people are living in harmony with nature.

Each of the 196 countries that have adopted the GBF are committed to updating and implementing a comprehensive “national biodiversity strategy and action plan”, or NBSAP, to turn this collective vision into a reality

*By 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and benefits essential for all people.*

- The vision of the Global Biodiversity Framework (page 8)<sup>9</sup>.

The GBF is part of a set of interlinked international agreements with complementary 2030 objectives, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Global Framework on Chemicals and efforts to counter land degradation. Together, these agreements set a realistic path towards a secure and sustainable future for all.

Together, these agreements set a realistic path towards a secure and sustainable future for all.

## 🌐 Levers of change

It will take an urgent, decisive and whole-of-society effort to reach the global biodiversity targets by 2030. This guide focuses on three key areas where big shifts are vital and achievable:

- 1) **Shifting financial flows to build a green economy**
- 2) **Making the production and consumption of food sustainable**
- 3) **Boosting the conservation and restoration of ecosystems**

Current unsustainable economies and the financial flows that drive them are a big part of the problem, so they must also be central to the solution. As well as more funding for nature, public and private financial flows must shift away from activities that are causing the biodiversity crises towards those that deliver benefits without doing harm.

\* The framework was agreed under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. See [www.cbd.int](http://www.cbd.int) for more about the convention.





**US\$700 billion per year: estimated size of the nature financing gap<sup>10</sup>.**

How food is produced and consumed is one of the biggest drivers of nature loss and a major source of the greenhouse gases heating up the atmosphere<sup>11,12</sup>. Transforming those food systems can play a central role in curbing deforestation, unsustainable fisheries, global warming and pollution, all while feeding and employing billions of people.



**72.5 million hectares of primary humid tropical forest has been lost since 2001  
7% of the total area – much of it converted to agriculture<sup>7</sup>.**

Direct action to conserve nature and help it recover can stop the loss of biodiversity. This includes the expansion and effective management of protected areas of land and ocean, ecosystem restoration at multiple scales, and ending the trade in endangered species.



**75% of the world's land, 85% of wetlands and 66% of the oceans have been impacted by humans<sup>3</sup>.  
Plastic pollution has now been found from the highest mountains to the deepest seas<sup>13,14</sup>.**

## Agents of change

Under the GBF, governments have committed to update and implement their national biodiversity strategies and action plans to drive the changes needed for stopping nature loss. Direct government intervention to achieve national and international goals is crucial, but meeting the 2030 targets demands every part of society acts for a sustainable future.

Individuals, communities and civil society groups, businesses and international organizations have critical roles to play. As well as taking steps themselves, every actor can encourage and support others to make decisions that strengthen nature – and hold those with greatest responsibility to account when they fall short. In targets 22 and 23, the GBF calls for “ensuring participation in decision making” and “gender equality and gender responsive approaches” in biodiversity action.

This guide focuses on ways for individuals to help secure a biodiverse future through effective advocacy as well as their own actions and choices. Alone and collectively, every person is a decision-maker with the power to make a difference in their lives, livelihoods, communities and countries.







**WHAT YOU  
CAN DO**

## 💡 Get your facts straight

Understanding the threat posed by the loss of nature is a vital first step to finding solutions and motivating governments, businesses and individuals to implement them.

To increase your personal knowledge of nature and identify how you can make a difference, seek out resources through media channels, libraries, environmental groups, political parties and government bodies that you can trust as sources of reliable information.

As well as grasping the big picture, look closely at the place where you live. Is the environment degrading? What are the impacts on people and nature? What are the causes? What can be done? Who can do it?

Here are some more concrete ideas:

- ✓ Join an environmental organization and see what events and discussions are going on, including at a local level
- ✓ Support others in getting involved – especially those that are marginalized in decision making like women, people of colour, Indigenous Peoples or economically disadvantaged groups
- ✓ Talk to senior citizens about local environmental changes they have witnessed, particularly in areas where issues are not well documented
- ✓ Discuss the state of nature with friends and relatives, and listen with an open mind to different views on what should be done
- ✓ Be discerning: in a world awash in disinformation, prioritize claims about the state of nature and proposed solutions that are backed by peer-reviewed scientific data and evidence

## 💡 The big push

Governments can bring about the big shifts needed to halt environmental degradation, for example, by providing the legal basis and financial incentives for the sustainable economy of the future. As individuals, we can urge decision-makers in government and industry to adopt new policies and practices. We can personally advocate for change by supporting leaders with strong environmental policies. We can seek and take part in public consultations on planning processes and projects that impact nature. We can also act through civil society groups, including non-governmental organizations, faith groups, women groups, youth organizations, trade unions or political parties.

We can hold leaders and institutions to account. We can insist on transparency about the design and impact of measures taken in the name of protecting nature, and for immediate improvements when objectives are missed. This includes protecting the rights of Indigenous People seeking to shield their lands from illegal and harmful activities.



Indigenous Peoples manage or have tenure rights over more than one-quarter of the world's land area, including many of its most ecologically intact landscapes<sup>15</sup>.



Photo: Rustam Iuchenko

## 💡 Do-it-yourself

As well as pushing governments and businesses for system-wide change, we can help safeguard and restore nature through personal choices that make our lives and lifestyles greener.

How and what we consume has a huge influence on nature and the environment. Choosing sustainable products and services rewards providers that are helping to green the economy and end its harmful impacts.

Many consumers produce large amounts of waste, from food to clothes to electrical goods. As well as favouring sustainably produced goods, buy only things that you really need and try to use them for longer, including by repairing or repurposing them. It is also important to consider what you eat because in many parts of the world this is likely to be the greatest factor in your environmental impact (see the section "Food systems").



Photo: Todd Brown



# 1. FINANCIAL FLOWS AND THE ECONOMY

Every year, governments and businesses pour trillions of dollars in subsidies and investments into activities from fossil fuel extraction to unsustainable agriculture and construction that are harming nature and the climate<sup>16</sup>. These sums dwarf the amount invested directly into nature, adding to the pressures eroding the foundations of social prosperity and well-being – and of corporate profitability.



Nature-negative financial flows from the public and private sectors total nearly US\$7 trillion<sup>17</sup>.



About 87% of US\$540 billion in annual support to agricultural producers is price distorting or harmful to nature and health<sup>17</sup>.

This finance needs to be urgently rerouted to build the circular and sustainable economies of the future, where the environmental footprint of products and services is minimized and accompanied by more actions to protect and restore healthy ecosystems.

In addition, more funds must flow into programmes and measures to protect and restore nature, to reap the environmental, social and economic benefits (see section “Ecosystem protection and restoration”).



*Changing the way we produce and consume—and shifting to practices that allow nature to regenerate and recover—is both a matter of survival and a multitrillion-dollar investment opportunity.*

- Makhtar Diop, Managing Director, International Finance Corporation<sup>18</sup>.

## 🔗 The big push

Find ways to show leaders that you expect them to take actions to shift finance and the economy onto a nature-friendly track such as those outlined in this guide, or with other measures appropriate to the country or area where you live.

### Subsidies

Governments should be transparent about environment-harming subsidies. They could hold public discussion on how to phase out harmful forms of support and redirect them to accelerate green activities that provide the same or greater benefits without degrading nature (see “The big push” in the section “Food systems”). As a first step, governments should reduce harmful subsidies by at least US\$500 billion annually by 2030 to fulfil their commitment under Target 18 of the GBF.





### Biodiversity finance

Governments should fund directly and incentivize other support for the protection and restoration of nature as well as for action on climate and ecosystem degradation. In addition to protecting more natural areas in their countries (see section “Ecosystem protection and restoration”), governments—especially wealthier ones—must fulfil their commitment to provide more financial assistance to poorer nations to safeguard nature across the developing world, ensuring at least US\$20 billion annually by 2025 as called for by the GBF, while also urging international financial institutions to step up their contributions to these efforts.

### Beyond GDP

To shift economies in the right direction, we need a better compass. That means looking beyond narrow measures of economic health like gross domestic product (GDP)<sup>19</sup>, which do not account for environmental degradation or long-term sustainability. Governments should consider all aspects of social and economic well-being, including the benefits we get from nature. For example, natural capital accounting—which measures stocks of natural assets as well as human and built capital—can help policymakers make better long-term choices in important areas from spatial planning to public service provision and industrial policy.

✓ Natural capital per capita has dropped by more than half since 1990<sup>20</sup>.

### Government spending

As big economic actors, governments should use their spending power to support nature-friendly products and systems, including through their procurement policies and practices. For instance, authorities can light, heat and cool public buildings with renewable energy and serve only sustainable foods in state-run schools and hospitals.

✓ Under French law, at least half of the content of school meals must meet sustainability or quality criteria, including at least 20% organic produce<sup>2</sup>.

Governments (and companies) can also support more research, for instance through public universities, into innovations that can green our economies and reduce the pressure on nature, such as renewable energy systems and alternative materials.

Photo: Todd Brown

## Better regulation

Governments could help sustainable practices in industries to emerge and thrive by creating legal markets for sustainable products, for instance through product standards and labelling requirements (see section “Food systems”).

Governments could channel investment toward sustainable industries by tightening and enforcing laws such as those restricting or banning trade in endangered species and in products linked to deforestation, overfishing and pollution.



**The Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species bans or restricts international trade in products like elephant ivory, shark fins and pangolin scales. For example, 13 countries in Africa and Asia are working to halt the illegal trade in elephant ivory<sup>21</sup>.**

Governments could require large and transnational companies and financial institutions (and enable others) to assess and disclose their risks, dependencies and impacts on biodiversity (see “Corporate action”), aligning with Target 15 of the GBF.

## Educate consumers

Government agencies should support the provision of clear and reliable public information about the environment and environmental impacts of consumption choices to help people make sustainable choices that encourage companies to adapt their products and production processes. This could mean adding subjects such as climate change and environmental management to school and university curricula and through product labelling systems. Given the disproportionate effects of environmental degradation on women, information should aim to be gender-responsive<sup>22</sup>.



**Thirst for knowledge: In India, the popularity of internet searches for biodiversity and nature loss rose 190% between 2016 and 2020<sup>23</sup>.**

## Corporate action

Companies and other organizations should monitor, assess and make public the social and environmental impacts of their activities and rethink their products and services to eliminate negative effects, including those on biodiversity and the climate.



**Starting from 2023 companies were able to use a new global framework to report and address nature-related risks.<sup>24</sup>**



photo: Gerardo



*Protecting nature makes our business more resilient and helps us deliver for patients by ensuring the supply of raw materials needed to manufacture vital medicines and vaccines.*

*- Julie Brown, Chief Financial Officer of GSK plc, a biopharma company, and the first company to commit to using a new global framework to report and address nature-related risks<sup>25</sup>.*

Companies can meet, pre-empt or exceed mandatory labelling requirements by providing customers with verified information about the impact of their products and services on nature and the climate, and their efforts to improve their environmental performance.

Financial businesses such as banks and pension funds, in their lending policies and investment portfolios and in the products and advice offered to clients, should favour companies with nature-friendly business models or those making tangible efforts to become sustainable.

## Do-it-yourself

You can also help shift the needle on greening finance and financing green action through your personal choices and engagement. Here are some ideas.

### Bank sustainably

Open personal accounts only with banks and financial institutions that convince you that they are operating sustainably and are committed to supporting businesses that are good for nature. Move your accounts away from banks that do not meet your standards or are not transparent in their dealings. UNEP's Principles for Sustainable Banking outline what steps banks can follow to be more sustainable<sup>26</sup>. If you have personal investments, including pensions, shift them to securities issued by companies with stellar and credible environmental credentials and a business model that is sustainable in the long-term. Investment companies have developed ESG (environmental, social and governance) ratings to help investors identify sustainable options.

✓ Global assets in sustainable investment funds reached an estimated US\$3 trillion in 2024<sup>27</sup>.

### Buy green

Direct your personal spending to products and services with a minimal environmental footprint and to companies that are clearly committed to progressively reducing their impacts on the environment. Credible sustainability labelling schemes—such as those measuring impacts all along supply chains and run by independent organizations—can help identify greener suppliers.

### Advocate for greener finance

Get involved in advocacy for a greener economy, for instance through political parties, non-governmental organizations and taking part in public discussions of how to re-channel financial flows that are harming nature.

### Raise your voice

Seek information on progress toward official targets to green the economy and increase biodiversity finance; urge leaders to redouble their efforts if they are falling behind, potentially including through peaceful assemblies and holding their Governments accountable.



## Legal Action for the Environment

✓ In 2022, the UN General Assembly recognized the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a human right<sup>28</sup>.

✓ Climate change court cases have more than doubled since 2017<sup>29</sup>.

## Claim your environmental rights!

✓ More than 100 countries have guaranteed their citizens the right to a clean and healthy environment. Some have set legally binding targets in areas such as climate protection and air quality. Indigenous Peoples may also have customary rights that grant them stewardship of natural resources, including biodiversity-rich ecosystems



✓ In a historic move, the United Nations has declared a healthy environment a human right in 2022<sup>30</sup>. Environmental human rights defenders strive to protect rights relating to, for instance, water, air, land, flora and fauna. As well as advocating for the respect of their rights, including through peaceful assemblies, rights defenders can hold Governments to account by taking legal action



✓ Learn about your environmental rights and identify the best way to take peaceful action to secure justice, whilst considering any potential risks to yourself and others.



✓ UNEP works with Governments, businesses, civil society organizations and media to advance environmental rights and protect environmental defenders<sup>30</sup>.





# 2. FOOD SYSTEMS



All the food we eat depends on nature. Healthy soil can contain thousands of species of insects, worms, fungi and bacteria<sup>31</sup>. And three out of four food crops around the world depend at least in part on nature's pollinators such as bees, birds, butterflies, beetles and even bats<sup>32</sup>.

But how we produce, and harvest food is the most important driver of biodiversity loss on land and in the ocean and a major contributor to climate change<sup>3,33</sup>. Around half of the world's land surface is used for agriculture to feed growing and more affluent human populations<sup>34</sup>.

Worldwide, women form over 40 per cent of the agricultural labour force, but often face significant barriers in access to land rights, finance and agricultural inputs. They suffer disproportionately when ecosystems degrade, as they are often the ones responsible for securing food, water and fuel for their families<sup>35,36,37</sup>.



Half of the world's habitable land is used for farming<sup>36</sup>.



Agriculture is a threat to 24,000 (86%) of 28,000 species at risk of extinction<sup>12</sup>.

Intensive farming methods mean few wild species can survive in landscapes devoted to crop and livestock production. Twenty-three per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions derive from agriculture, forestry and other use<sup>38</sup>.

Excessive use of pesticides and fertilizers and of irrigation are degrading and polluting rivers and wetlands and creating "dead zones" in coastal and freshwaters<sup>39</sup>, posing a threat to humans and biodiversity alike. They are also fuelling soil erosion and exhaustion, which undermines the long-term ability of land to provide food<sup>40</sup>.



550 million birds have disappeared from Europe since 1980 with the intensification of farming as a key driver<sup>41</sup>.



Photo: Terence Emerson

More and more people eat animal-based foods in quantities associated with higher risks for ill health including heart disease and diabetes<sup>42</sup>. Meat and dairy products are often produced using intensive methods and require large amounts of land (also to produce animal feed), have high greenhouse gas emissions and raise animal welfare concerns<sup>43</sup>.



More than three quarters of agricultural land is used directly or indirectly (through growing animal feed) to produce meat<sup>36</sup>.



Photo: Kelly Sikkema



Photo: Fotokostic

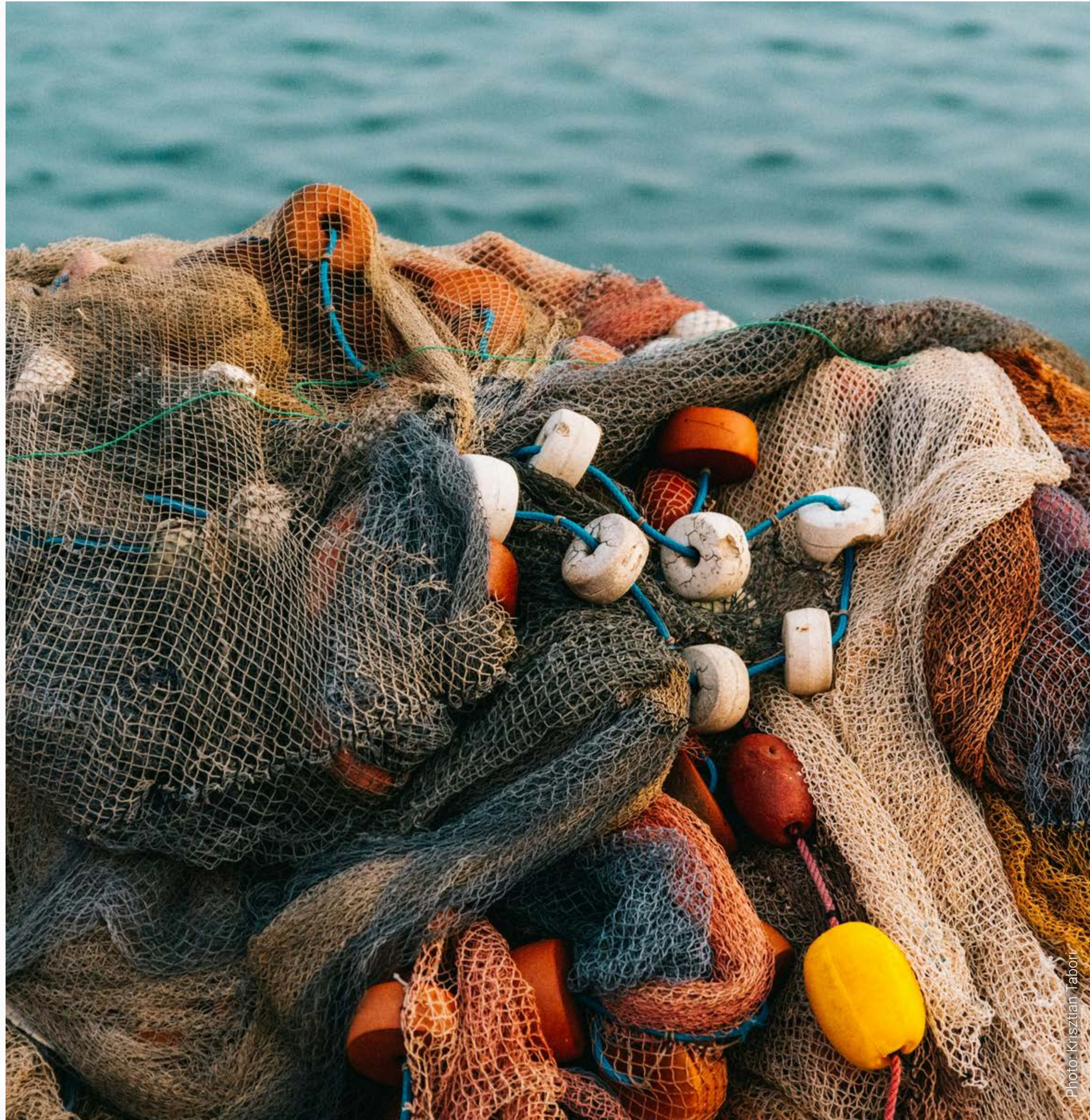


Photo: Krisztian Tabori

About one-third of all food is lost or wasted before it can be eaten, meaning we need even more land and other resources for food production<sup>44</sup>.

Overfishing degrades marine and freshwater ecosystems, including through illegal fishing and the bycatch of species such as turtles<sup>45</sup>. As well as degrading nature, overfishing undermines the livelihoods of millions of people who rely on inland waters or oceans for food and work<sup>46</sup>.



The share of overexploited fisheries has tripled since 1974 so that 35% are being pushed beyond their biological limits<sup>47</sup>.



Photo: Kijapan Film

## 💡 The big push

To bring about the change we need, find ways to show leaders that you expect them to take actions to transform food systems in ways that rebuild rather than destroy nature such as those outlined in this guide, or with other measures appropriate to the country or area where you live.

### Subsidies

Governments need to repurpose agricultural subsidies that are harming nature, for instance by fuelling the overuse of polluting chemicals and the conversion of natural habitats to farmland (see “The big push” in the “Financial flows and the economy” section, and the “Nature-friendly farming” section), or redirect them towards environmental stewardship schemes to provide public goods from managed land.



Agricultural subsidies are responsible for the loss of 2.2 million hectares of forest every year, or 14% of global deforestation<sup>48</sup>.



Photo: Simone Milward

## Nature-friendly farming

Governments could promote and support—including with redirected subsidies—sustainable ways of farming that need fewer polluting inputs, emit less greenhouse gases, consume less water and support more wildlife.

Greener farming methods must be suited to local conditions, livelihoods and food preferences; they can include mixed livestock and cropping systems, agroforestry, organic farming, no-till systems and drip irrigation.

## Technical and financial support

Governments, especially of wealthier countries, should provide financial and technical support—such as access to credit and training—to enable farmers everywhere to work in sustainable ways that protect their land. Governments should offer financial incentives for farmers to provide native habitats for wildlife on their land and help deliver other broad social benefits, such as carbon sequestration, protection from disasters and supplies of clean water.

✓ **Agri-environment schemes can involve payments to farmers for i) reducing environmental risks (for example, the use of pesticides, herbicides and synthetic fertilizer); ii) protecting wildlife (for example, maintaining areas of natural vegetation and modifying practices such as mowing and ploughing); and iii) preserving traditional farming methods.**



Photo: Zoran Zeleny

Authorities and companies should fund the research and development of technologies and approaches to sustainably intensify food production and leave more space for nature.



Photo: Antonio Araujo

## Sustainable fishing

Governments should reduce subsidies (for fuel, construction of fishing vessels and processing infrastructure, and price support) that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing in the fishing industry and thus the overfishing of fish stocks and degradation of marine and freshwater ecosystems.

✓ **Annual output from fisheries and aquaculture is about 180 million tons, worth more than US\$400 billion, and is expected to rise further<sup>50</sup>.**



Photo: eadafize

Governments should cooperate with industry and each other to improve the regulation of fisheries and fisheries trade, including on the high seas, and to reduce ghost fishing gear. Food companies, including importers, should ensure they are sourcing their products only from legal and sustainable fisheries.



Photo: Amanda Phung

## Healthy and sustainable diets

Governments and food companies should promote seasonal and plant-rich diets and point out the health risks as well as the environmental harm that result from eating too much meat and dairy produce, especially in wealthy nations.

While dietary choice can be a sensitive topic to discuss and should consider local contexts (e.g. local meat production and consumption remains important for many pastoral communities), for individuals in many parts of the world, food choices represent one of the most significant opportunities individuals have to reduce their impact on nature and climate.

Governments and food companies should urgently and significantly expand the supply of proteins with a light environmental footprint, such as those derived from plants or insects<sup>51</sup>.



Photo: Raspopova Marina

## Loss and waste

Governments should raise awareness among the public of the impact of food waste and ways to reduce it.



**14% of the total food produced for human consumption is lost, while 17% is wasted; 61% of food waste occurs in households<sup>46</sup>.**



Governments should improve public infrastructure such as roads and markets and work with business to provide food storage and handling facilities—including cold stores—along supply chains and at produce markets.

Food companies should work with producers to match supply and demand and find uses for excess produce, for example as animal feed or feedstock for biofuels, and should measure and report their performance on reducing waste.

Local authorities should counter food loss and waste by promoting urban and peri-urban agriculture to shorten supply chains, providing food recycling services, and banning food waste from landfills.



**SDG 12.3 aims to halve food waste and reduce food loss by 2030.**

## Labelling

Food companies should label their products with clear and verifiable information on their origin, environmental footprint and nutritional value so that consumers can make nature-positive choices (see “The big push” in the section “Financial flows and the economy”, and the section “Do-it-yourself”).



Photo: Shutterstock

## 💡 Do-it-yourself

You can also help transform food systems to benefit nature and the climate through your personal choices and engagement. Here are some ideas.

### Sustainable diets

Dietary choice represents one of the largest opportunities for individuals in many parts of the world to reduce their environmental footprint.

Eat foods such as those that are certified sustainable or from local producers that you trust so you are confident they do not contribute to the degradation of nature.

Lean toward a locally appropriate plant-rich diet, for instance with more fruits and vegetables and less meat and dairy products, which can improve your health as well as protect the planet. This of course depends on the area you live in and the products locally available in your community.

Embrace diverse plant-based foods to support diverse farming systems, whose mosaic structure can support more wildlife as well as making rural livelihoods more resilient in the face of climate change.



### Waste

Buy locally grown produce to reduce the amount of food lost along long-distance supply chains. Only buy and cook what you need to minimize the amount of food that you waste – this will also save you money! Donate to friends, neighbours or food banks any food that you cannot use; if that is not an option, use it to feed pets or domestic animals or to make compost.

### Raise your voice

Seek information from government agencies and other organizations on progress toward targets—including any legally binding commitments—to overhaul food systems and urge leaders to redouble their efforts if they are falling behind (see the factbox above on “Claim your environmental rights”).

### Grow your own

If you have space, grow your own food and enjoy it at its best to eliminate waste and maximize its nutritional value. Integrate a vegetable patch into an organic garden with different sorts of plants and trees that supports pollinators and other wildlife.

### Spread the word

Get others interested in sustainable diets. Invite friends and family to share a healthy meal made with nature-friendly, plant-based ingredients, sourced locally and portioned modestly to avoid waste – a homemade discussion topic!.





# 3. ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION AND RESTORATION

Over millennia, the activities of people have impacted Earth's land and oceans with increasing intensity. All parts of the planet now feel the presence of people. Nature has been moved aside for farmlands, settlements, industry and infrastructure. As a result, many natural ecosystems have been destroyed or degraded and millions of wild species driven toward extinction<sup>3</sup>.

On-the-ground conservation and restoration are important elements of any strategy to halt nature loss and achieve a sustainable future.

By restricting some human activities and promoting the conservation of biodiversity, protected areas preserve important areas for biodiversity and threatened landscapes, prevent extinctions and provide vital benefits to people, from stores of water, carbon and genetic resources to support for recreation and spiritual well-being.



**The world's protected areas receive about 8 billion visits every year<sup>53</sup>.**

Meanwhile, restoration aims to identify the drivers of degradation and take practical steps to address them and rebuild natural processes at large scales in both wild and modified ecosystems, including farmlands and fisheries.



**Land degradation impacts the well-being of more than 3 billion people and costs more than 10% of global annual GDP in lost biodiversity and ecosystem services<sup>3</sup>.**

Currently, less than one-fifth of the planet's land and national coastal waters are officially protected, while in the high seas the figure is less than 10 per cent. To effectively conserve biodiversity more effective and better-resourced protected areas are urgently needed.

As well as helping to address global environmental challenges, conservation and restoration are vital for the protection of nature and the benefits they provide to people at regional, national and local levels.

## The big push

To bring about the change we need, find ways to tell leaders that you expect them to protect and restore significantly more areas of land, freshwater and ocean such as those outlined in this guide, or with other measures appropriate to the country or area where you live.

## Protected areas

Governments should improve the effectiveness of existing areas and where resources are available expand formal protected areas dedicated to and managed for the conservation of nature. Protected area networks should be designed to include and connect areas of high biodiversity and help threatened species to recover.





## Other conservation areas

Governments should recognize and support local communities, Indigenous Peoples and private entities who manage “other effective area-based conservation measures”, or OECMs. These are areas—from tracts of the Amazon to Pacific Ocean reefs—beyond official protected areas that contribute to long-term conservation goals. Indigenous and Traditional Territories, including those that might also be recognized as OECMs or protected areas are also vital in maintaining the culture and traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples, who are often skilled custodians of nature.

## Restoration

Governments should meet and expand their existing commitments to restore degraded ecosystems.



Countries have committed to restoring over 1 billion hectares of degraded land and coasts – an area larger than China<sup>55</sup>.

In a first step, governments must make every effort to meet all GBF targets for 2030. This includes halting human-induced extinctions, bringing the loss of biodiversity hotspots close to zero, restoring 30 per cent of degraded ecosystems and conserving 30 per cent of land and oceans. Achieving these goals requires coordinated progress across the entire framework, including securing financial resources, achieving sustainable management and ensuring stakeholder participation.

## Private sector action

Private actors, including companies, who control extensive areas on land or at sea should restore the ecosystems of those areas, manage them for the conservation of nature and regularly report and disclose on these actions.

## Effective management

Governments and private actors should ensure that all areas managed for conservation have the resources they need for effective management and avoid creating “paper parks” that fail to protect nature.

## Stopping extinction

Governments and businesses should work to enforce restrictions on the trade in endangered species, whether from illegally harvested timber and reptiles smuggled as pets, to rhino horn and elephant tusks.



## 💡 Do-it-yourself

You can also help to protect and restore nature through your personal choices and engagement. Here are some ideas.

### Join the #GenerationRestoration movement

There has never been a more urgent need to revive damaged ecosystems than now. Ecosystems support all life on Earth. The healthier our ecosystems are, the healthier the planet - and its people. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) aims to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems on every continent and in every ocean. It can help to end poverty, combat climate change and prevent a mass extinction. It will only succeed if everyone plays a part. Discover how you can get involved at [www.decade-onrestoration.org](http://www.decade-onrestoration.org).

### Join an organization

Join a conservation organization or restoration project and get involved in local efforts to establish and strengthen protected areas and revive degraded ecosystems in your country or region.



Photo: Todd Brown

## Start a project

Volunteer and recruit others to carry out conservation and restoration work in green spaces big or small in your area. This can be anywhere from an overused local park to neglected roadsides and riverbanks. Dip into the Ecosystem Restoration Playbook<sup>56</sup> and the Community Organizing Toolkit<sup>57</sup> for ideas.

## Raise your voice

Seek information from government agencies and other organizations on progress toward targets— including any legally binding commitments—to protect and restore nature and urge leaders to redouble their efforts if they are falling behind (see the factbox “Claim your environmental rights!”)..



Photo: Jacob Lund

## Re-wild your garden, balcony or windowsill

If you have a garden or other outdoor space, encourage more native vegetation, avoid using harmful chemicals and re-wild a corner to support your local plant, insect and bird species. If possible, reduce household and garden waste by using it to make soil-enriching compost in which you could grow vegetables or other plants – creating a small-scale, circular and sustainable economy of your own (see “Grow your own” in the “Food systems” section above).

## Nature-friendly diets

Eat a healthy, regional, seasonal and plant-based diet to help reduce the amount of land used to produce food and leave more space for nature (see “Do-it-yourself” in the “Food systems” section above).



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