

A MESSAGE FROM

OUR CHAIR

During the past year the world has faced not only the ongoing pressures of the global pandemic but also the accelerating impacts of our warming planet, including severe droughts and floods, terrible wildfires, and the hottest temperatures in Europe and North America since records began.

These and many other environmental disasters this year underline an urgent need for everyone to step up and make a difference in the fight for our world.

And, as you'll see in this report, that's exactly the challenge my colleagues at WWF have risen to. I would like to offer each and every one of them, in the UK and internationally, my heartfelt thanks for their incredible commitment and resolve in the face of such difficult conditions. My sincere thanks, too, to our fantastic supporters who have helped us to keep delivering against our mission – and our many partners and stakeholders whose expertise and input is vital in helping us to achieve this.

I also take this opportunity to share our sadness about the death in April of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, who was a pivotal patron of WWF and served as a passionate champion of our work ever since we were founded in 1961. He was the first president of WWF-UK and a lifelong advocate for the environment and conservation.

And right now, our one shared home needs all the help it can get. This year our latest *Living Planet Report* showed that nature is in freefall. In the 60 years since WWF was founded, our natural world – our life-support system – has come under unprecedented attack. Humankind is destroying the planet's forests, polluting our oceans, decimating wildlife populations and causing devastating changes to the climate.

UN secretary general António Guterres gave a stark assessment of our planet's predicament when he branded the findings of this year's landmark Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report a 'code red for humanity'. The IPCC report confirms human activity is changing the climate in unprecedented and sometimes irreversible ways. It warns of increasingly extreme heatwaves,

droughts and flooding. And it makes clear that only rapid and drastic reductions in greenhouse gases *in this decade* can prevent climate breakdown, with every fraction of a degree of further heating likely to compound the accelerating effects.

We know there remains hope – for people, for the climate and for the recovery of nature. But only if the world pulls together with the meaningful action and speed a 'code red' demands.

With such categorical evidence that this must be a decade of action, a last chance to steer the climate and nature onto a path to recovery, it is vital for WWF-UK to ensure our strategy is absolutely up to this task.

So we invited experts both inside and outside WWF to challenge our thinking and our existing strategy – to make sure we have the right priorities, and that we're striving for outcomes that can make the impact we need in the time we have. Crucially, our plans include clear targets for us to achieve transformational results not just by the end of the decade but against 12-month and three-year outcomes.

The refined strategy focuses even more squarely on tackling the main drivers behind the biggest environmental problems – notably climate change and the food system. The way we produce and consume food is the leading cause of global nature loss and is responsible for up to 30% of greenhouse gas emissions. We're also focusing on the financial and economic systems that hold the key to putting us on track to a future where we limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C. And we're calling on the UK government to apply a 'net-zero' test to all its spending and investment decisions.

The world must address the climate crisis, fix the food system and restore nature at the same time. So our strategy also has a strong focus on restoring threatened habitats and species. Fundamental to that is working with local communities. Their knowledge is instrumental to what we want to achieve; working with them is of the utmost importance if we are to reverse the devastating loss of nature.

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Such work is not without its challenges, making it essential that our governance is as watertight as possible. The board has overseen further work this year to ensure we have the appropriate processes and skills in place to maintain all possible vigilance against any wrongdoing wherever we support or fund work. I am delighted to welcome new colleagues who have joined WWF's board of trustees during the year, bringing their expertise in this key area and on other vital matters: Kirsty Brimelow QC, a hugely experienced barrister with particular expertise in international human rights violations; Dorcas Gwata, a global health and safeguarding consultant; and Dr Steve Waygood, a leading expert in sustainable finance.

I believe WWF is now in the best possible shape to spearhead truly transformational changes and protect the world we all rely on for our survival. Not least among the opportunities to do so is just around the corner, as the UK hosts the UN climate summit in November. At WWF, we will be putting our point of view strongly to all stakeholders, but with humanity at 'code red' we look to world leaders to take responsibility and kickstart this vital decade of change by agreeing truly ambitious and urgent action.

I hope you will join us and give every support possible as we tackle the most pressing challenges of our times.

Dave Lewis

A MESSAGE FROM

OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Sixty years ago, a small group of passionate, committed leaders and thinkers on the environment came together to sign an international declaration to save the world's wildlife. It was the founding moment of what was then called the World Wildlife Fund.

It is an honour to lead WWF-UK after all these decades, building on the pioneering work of those founders to fulfil our mission: to build a future in which people live in harmony with nature.

The past year will be one that just about everyone will remember vividly. As the pandemic stretched beyond 2020 and touched every corner of the globe, so many people saw their worlds become dramatically smaller – the walls of their home, the boundaries of their local areas. There was a risk that in the circumstances, the climate and nature crisis might recede in its importance in people's lives.

The reality could not have been more different. Rather than people becoming less concerned about the environment, we have seen quite the opposite: an outpouring of support, of commitment. People are more galvanised than ever to protect and restore our planet – our one shared home.

However, it has still been an immensely difficult and often frustrating year. While the pandemic made some of our activities more challenging, it did not reduce the urgency of our mission – and the last year has shown us more starkly than ever just how urgent that mission is. From deadly, record-breaking heatwaves in North America and Russia to wildfires from California to Cyprus; from the devastating floods in Europe to the heartbreak of a climate-driven famine in Madagascar, we have never been far from the heart-rending impacts of environmental destruction.

On a personal level, while taking part in a second Earth Hour during a national lockdown, I reflected on the landmark moments we've achieved in our determination to give our world a brighter future. Achievements such as the launch of Sir David Attenborough's amazing, hard-hitting film, *A Life On Our Planet*; the commitments won from the UK government on nature restoration and sustainable agriculture; and our record-breaking appeal that raised £4.76 million to support community efforts in Kenya and Tanzania to help people and wildlife thrive together.

I was also heartened by the interest shown in our 'Learn to Love Nature' online initiative, which offered educators a variety of creative ways to bring nature and conservation to life for young people – from making bee hotels and apple bird feeders to green heart animals. We have seen more people than ever willing to stand up for nature. More than 500,000 new supporters joined the fight for our world this year. And those voices are being heard.

Our own *Living Planet Report* gave the world further evidence that we urgently need to take action – with the headline that, on average, the population sizes of vertebrates across the world have fallen by around 68% in the last 50 years. And shortly after we released the report, we saw world leaders step up at the UN General Assembly to endorse a Leaders' Pledge for Nature – including a UK pledge to protect 30% of our land by 2030. The UK's commitment to a net-zero future has been joined by a commitment to put nature at the heart of reaching that goal.

As well as keeping up the pressure on our political leaders, we have increasingly been shining a light on what businesses can – and must – do. There are great companies taking the lead and showing what can be done, but many more must join them. In particular, the UK has the opportunity to lead the world in clean finance, but right now the finance sector is driving the high-carbon economy. In our *Big Smoke* report, we showed how our financial institutions are responsible for almost 1.8 times the emissions of the UK's entire annual net footprint. This has to change. We'll keep up the pressure on the government and our financial regulators to ensure all financial institutions have net-zero transition plans that cover all their investments and lending. We're calling for the UK to be the first financial sector in the world to commit to aligning with the Paris Climate Agreement's targets.

We have had strong success in keeping the climate high on the news agenda. This year our *Feeling the Heat* report made headlines with its outline of the terrible effects a warming world is predicted to have on both nature and people. The report explained the pressures on our own beloved bluebells, bumblebees, puffins and mountain hares, as well as snow leopards, emperor penguins, hippos, coral reefs and even coffee. It also included first-hand experiences of the impacts – such as increasingly severe flooding and drought – already being suffered by people from Alaska to the Amazon, and from the Maasai Mara to Bangladesh.



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We know the fight to prevent climate catastrophe and turn around the destruction of nature cannot be won without making changes to every sector of our economy and every part of our lives. In our determination to tackle this challenge from all angles, WWF has found itself being active and vocal in areas we might not have dreamed of even five years ago.

Our work on trade is a great example of this. Even as we've welcomed further commitments on farming that can help to restore nature – many of which we've long been calling for – we have also seen the peril of bad trade deals that could undermine those improvements by exporting our environmental footprint rather than reducing it.

In the year ahead, we know we need to keep standing up for high environmental standards and pressing the UK government to export those standards globally, using our country's market power to drive demand for sustainable, high-welfare farming around the world, rather than inviting imports that leave environmental destruction in their wake.

We have only been able to continue all of this work thanks to the fantastic commitment and generosity of our supporters who, in such turbulent times, have continued to join us in the fight for our world and who helped us to generate income of more than £84 million in the year. This

was above the level of funds budgeted and has helped us to increase our charitable spend by more than £2 million. This income has also helped secure financial sustainability during an uncertain period. I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you. I know that the team at WWF take great joy in our thank-you days each year, when we speak directly with many of our supporters to thank them for everything they do.

For me, there is no greater inspiration in tough times than a letter from one of our young supporters showing their excitement about our natural world, their curiosity and their optimism for the future. Each and every one of them is precious. Our mission is to help create a better world for them.

As we look to the future, we know we can be proud of the promises and commitments we have won from decision makers, even as we press them to be more ambitious. And we will have a second, crucial task: keeping our politicians and business leaders up to the mark in *delivering* on those commitments. We won't forget the promises they've made – and we know our supporters won't forget them either. Together, we'll stand firm to make sure they are delivered.

Tanya Steele

OUR FOCUS

RIGHT NOW, OUR PLANET IS UNDER THREAT

LIKE NEVER BEFORE

Nature is in freefall: we're destroying our forests, polluting our rivers and oceans, and causing devastating changes to the climate. WWF's latest *Living Planet Report* shows average population sizes of vertebrate wildlife have declined by 68% since 1970. We're also seeing the effects on our own doorstep: more than half of UK species have declined since 1970.

The fight for our world is now about much more than saving tigers, elephants and giant pandas – it's about survival for all of us, in our one shared home.

BUT THERE IS HOPE

At WWF we know the solutions already exist to turn things around for future generations – if we urgently scale-up our efforts.

Shockingly, the way we produce and consume food drives 60% of global nature loss – and around 37% of the world's land area is used for food production, leaving increasingly smaller areas of our shared home for wildlife to inhabit. The natural world is also increasingly threatened by climate change. The science says we must address the climate crisis, fix the food system and restore nature at the same time. So we must limit global warming to 1.5°C, transform the way we produce and consume food, and provide space for nature to recover.

WWF is uniquely well-placed to help turn things around. We've been protecting nature's wonders for more than 60 years.

We're the only organisation making the links between food, climate and biodiversity loss, and our strategy focuses on tackling these threats in three key ways:

- **averting dangerous climate change**
- **creating a sustainable food system**
- **restoring threatened habitats and species.**

We have the scientific knowledge to help achieve this, thanks to groundbreaking research on nature, climate and the need for reform of food and agriculture systems. And along with our expertise in conservation and advocacy, the global reach of the WWF network and the backing of our supporters, we can influence governments and businesses.

We need everyone – the public, businesses and governments in the UK and overseas – to act. With our partners and amazing supporters we can help restore forests, rivers and oceans; we can bring endangered wildlife back from the brink of extinction. And we can wake up politicians and businesses to the reality of climate change and the loss of nature.

We're already seeing results, such as more than 80 global leaders committing to reverse nature loss by 2030 by signing the 'Leaders Pledge for Nature', and the UK government setting out plans to put 'green' at the heart of our economic recovery. As a result of programmes we support through the WWF network, we've seen the Chinese government amend its forestry law to ban all illegal timber from China's supply chains, the Indian government announce WWF-endorsed minimum standards for managing its tiger reserves, and the number of mountain gorillas increase in Uganda.

To achieve the ambitious impacts we need to have, we're striving to greatly increase support for our work. We're putting our supporters at the centre of all we do – to encourage them to act with us, because everything we do relies on their incredible generosity. We're also determined to make WWF the most effective and inclusive organisation possible, to give us the best opportunity to deliver our strategy. And we'll ensure our conservation successes are achieved in harmony with people and an unflinching respect for human rights.

Our vision is that by 2030 the natural world's vital signs will be improving and we'll have halted the loss of nature.

Until 2024, we're focusing on the goals outlined on the next pages to set us on the right track to meeting this vital target.

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