

Biodiversity Negotiations Fail to Call for Global Halt to Species Extinctions

Ambition to Save Animals, Plants From Disappearing Must Increase

By [Center For Biological Diversity](#)

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A [draft of the global framework](#) to combat biodiversity loss was released today, and it fails to call for a halt to species’ extinctions. The framework is being negotiated by parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity — 195 countries plus the European Union — and the Convention is meant to function as the premier international agreement on biodiversity conservation. The framework has been under negotiation since 2019 and is supposed to guide the parties in sustaining a healthy planet during the next decade and on to 2050.

“We’re in the midst of a gut-wrenching biodiversity crisis and stand to lose over a million species unless we change the way we do business. Yet the framework meant to address this crisis globally doesn’t even call for stopping extinctions,” said Tanya Sanerib, international legal director at the Center for Biological Diversity. “This isn’t the transformative change that the scientific advisors on this treaty have called for. Human-induced loss of species needs to stop, and it needs to stop yesterday. So we can focus on species recovery.”

The so-called “first draft” that was released today, following the previous “zero draft,” requires greater ambition to protect biodiversity. Additionally, as the zero draft was being negotiated in 2020, the virus causing COVID-19 was quickly spreading globally. But despite the [likely zoonotic origins](#) of the virus and its probable ties to wildlife trade, the only outcome was a call for such trade to be “safe.” The version released today, in the wake of COVID-19’s catastrophic global consequences, is a call for trade, harvesting and use to be “safe for human health.”

“To truly minimize future pandemic risk, we need to rethink commercial use of wildlife. That means eliminating trade and exploitation that isn’t ecologically sustainable or legal, or poses a risk to human or animal health,” said Sanerib. “With a COVID-like event predicted every decade, we need decisive measures to reduce wildlife consumption. Otherwise we’ll all be reliving 2020 again and again.”

The framework includes a call to protect 30% of land and sea globally. While the United

States is not a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity, in early 2021 President Joe Biden signed an executive order — dubbed the [30x30 Initiative](#) — directing the Interior Department to conserve at least 30% of America’s lands and waters by the year 2030. But the executive order allows a lower standard for what counts as conservation when compared to the framework. Only 12% of U.S. land is currently protected.

The global framework is scheduled to be adopted in October at the CBD meeting in Kunming, China. But first the parties will meet virtually in August and September to negotiate the next draft.

“All hope rests on the upcoming virtual negotiations and whether nations can collectively agree to increase ambition and address the extinction crisis head-on,” said Sanerib. “Right now the road to Kunming is blocked by a lack of ambition. But I have faith we can overcome the obstacles and set our sights on saving life on Earth.”

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