

# Life on Earth is Dying. Thousands of Species Cease to Exist. Homo Sapiens is the Cause

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*On the day that you read this article, 200 species of life on Earth (plants, birds, animals, fish, amphibians, insects, reptiles) will cease to exist. Tomorrow, another 200 species will vanish forever.*

The human onslaught to destroy life on Earth is unprecedented in Earth's history. Planet Earth is now experiencing its sixth mass extinction event and Homo sapiens is the cause. Moreover, this mass extinction event is accelerating and is so comprehensive in its impact that the piecemeal measures being taken by the United Nations, international agencies and governments constitute a tokenism that is breathtaking in the extreme.

And it is no longer the case that mainly 'invisible' species are vanishing: those insects, amphibians and small animals about which you had never even heard, assuming they have been identified and given a name by humans.

You and I are on the brink of driving to extinction some of the most iconic species alive today. For [a photo gallery of threatened species](#), some of which are 'critically endangered', see 'World's wildlife being pushed to the edge by humans – in pictures'.

If you want to read more about some aspects of the extinction threat, you can do so in these recent reports: '[World Wildlife Crime Report: Trafficking in protected species](#)' and '[2016 Living Planet Report](#)' which includes these words: 'The main statistic from the report ... shows a 58% decline between 1970 and 2012. This means that, on average, animal populations are roughly half the size they were 42 years ago.'

And if you want to read just one aspect of what is happening in the world's oceans, this recent UN report will give you something to ponder: '[New UN report finds marine debris harming more than 800 species, costing countries millions](#)'.



Of course, some of what is happening is related to the ongoing climate catastrophe and there isn't any good news on that front. See [‘What’s Happening in the Arctic is Astonishing’](#).

But not everything that is going badly wrong is well known either. Did you know that we are destroying the Earth’s soil? See [‘Only 60 Years of Farming Left If Soil Degradation Continues’](#).

And did you realise that even nitrogen is now a huge problem too? See [‘Scientists shine a spotlight on the overlooked menace of nitrogen’](#).

Of course, military violence has devastating consequences on the Earth’s ecosystems too, destroying land, water and atmosphere (not to mention killing human beings) in the fight over resources. You will get no joy from the article ‘Iraq’s oil inferno – [government inaction in the face of eco-terrorism](#)’ or the website of the [Toxic Remnants of War Project](#).

But every single aspect of military spending is ultimately used to destroy. It has no other function.

While 2.5 billion human beings do not have enough to eat. See [‘One in three people suffers malnutrition at global cost of \\$3.5 trillion a year’](#)

As you read all this, you might say ‘Not me’! But you are wrong. You don’t have to be an impoverished African driven to killing elephants for their tusks so that you can survive yourself. You don’t have to be a farmer who is destroying the soil with synthetic poisons. You don’t have to be a soldier who kills and destroys or a person who works for a corporation that, one way to another, forces peasants off their land.

You just have to be an ‘ordinary’ person who pays your military taxes and consumes more than your share of world resources while participating without challenge in the global

system of violence and exploitation managed by the global elite.

‘Why is this?’ you might ask.

This is because the primary driver of the human-induced mass extinction is not such things as some people hunting a particular lifeform to extinction, horrendous though this is. In fact, just two things drive most species over the edge: our systematic destruction of land habitat – forests, grasslands, wetlands, peatlands, mangroves... – in our endless effort to capture more of the Earth’s wild places for human use (whether it be residential, commercial, mining, farming or military) and our destruction of waterways and the ocean habitat by dumping into them radioactive contaminants, carbon dioxide, a multitude of poisons and chemical pollutants, and even plastic.

And do you know what drives this destruction of land and water habitats? Your demand for consumer products, all of which are produced by using land and water habitats, and the resources derived from them, often far from where you live. The most basic products, such as food and clothing, are produced on agricultural land, sometimes created by destroying rainforests, or taken from the ocean (where overfishing has savagely depleted global fish stocks). But in using these resources, we have ignored the needs of the land, oceans and the waterways for adequate regenerative inputs and recovery time.

We also participate, almost invariably without question or challenge, in the inequitable distribution of resources that compels some impoverished people to take desperate measures to survive through such means as farming marginal land or killing endangered wildlife.

So don’t sit back waiting for some miracle by the United Nations, international agencies or governments to solve this problem. It cannot happen for the simple reason that these organizations are all taking action within the existing paradigm that prioritizes corporate profit and military violence over human equity and ecological sustainability.

Despite any rhetoric to the contrary, they are encouraging overconsumption by industrialized populations and facilitating the inequitable distribution of income and wealth precisely because this benefits those who control these organizations, agencies and governments: the insane corporate elites who are devoid of the capacity to see any value beyond the ‘bottom line’. See [‘The Global Elite is Insane’](#).

If you want action on the greatest challenge human beings have ever faced – to avert our own extinction by learning to live in harmony with our biosphere and equity with our fellow humans – then I encourage you to take personal responsibility.

If you do, you need to act. At the simplest level, you can make some difficult but valuable personal choices. Like becoming a vegan or vegetarian, buying/growing organic/biodynamic food, and resolutely refusing to use any form of poison or to drive a car or take an airline flight.

But if you want to take an integrated approach, the most powerful way you can do this is to systematically reduce your own personal consumption while increasing your self-reliance. Anita McKone and I have mapped out a fifteen-year strategy for doing this in [‘The Flame Tree Project to Save Life on Earth’](#).

You might also consider signing the online pledge of [‘The People’s Charter to Create a](#)

[Nonviolent World](#)' which obviously includes nonviolence towards our fellow species.

One of the hidden tragedies of modern human existence is that we have been terrorized into believing that we are not personally responsible. See ['The Delusion "I Am Not Responsible"'](#).

For a fuller explanation, see ['Why Violence?'](#) and ['Fearless Psychology and Fearful Psychology: Principles and Practice'](#).

It isn't true but few people feel powerful enough to make a difference.

And every time you decide to do nothing and to leave it to someone else, you demonstrate why no-one else should do anything either.

Extinction beckons. What will you do?

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