Sustainable Development Goals *Policy Brief*

Global Biodiversity Loss

UN environment

About

The **Sustainable Development Goals Policy Briefs** highlight a hotspot of environmental concern. The evidence provided builds on the scientific data and information hosted on the online platform Environment Live, and is complemented by stories from around the world. Readers are invited to explore the numerous clickable links throughout the Brief.

Biodiversity loss is caused by a range of different pressures, from habitat loss due to agricultural expansion, pollution or desertification to invasive alien species and climate change. At the root of every issue is one common thread: the unsustainable use of land and resources.

15 LIFE ON LAND

UN Environment is the custodian agency for key indicators related to Goal 15:
Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

14.5.1	Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas.
15.1.2	Proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas.
15.4.1	Coverage by protected areas of key sites for mountain biodiversity.
15.9.1	Progress towards targets established in accordance with Aichi Target 2.
15.a.1/b.1	Official development assistance and public expenditure on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Safeguarding biodiversity from an unprecedented range of threats

Protected areas are one of the tried and true methods for safeguarding biodiversity, but in isolation they often do not allow for natural movement of species across landscapes. **Connecting protected areas via nature-friendly corridors** is a key way of multiplying their conservation effectiveness and resilience.

2011-2020 United Nations Decade on Biodiversity

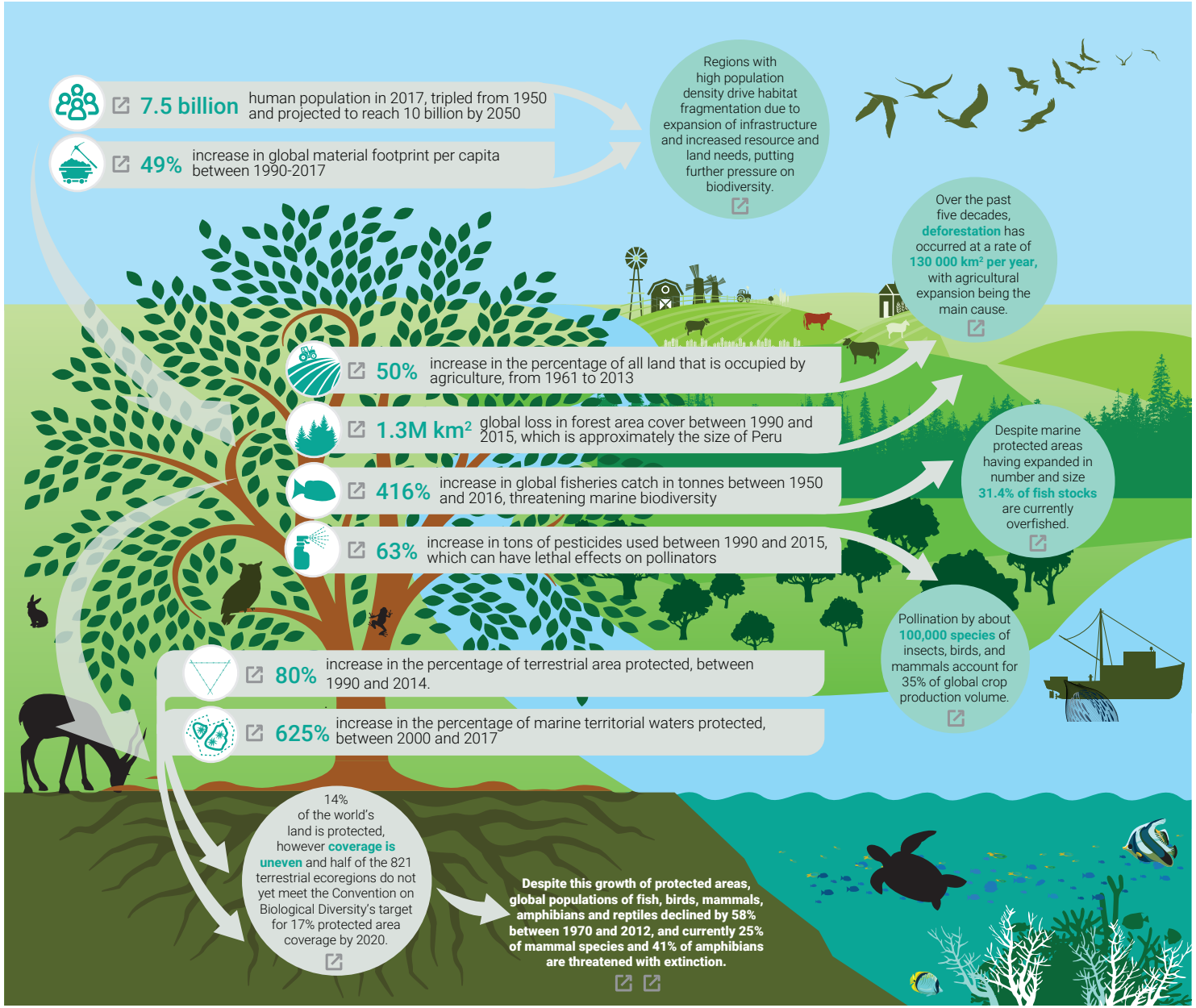
Conserving biodiversity is crucial to the achievement of most Sustainable Development Goals, including:

- **SDG 1** No Poverty
- **SDG 2** Zero Hunger
- **SDG 3** Good Health
- **SDG 6** Clean Water and Sanitation
- **SDG 14** Life Below Water
- **SDG 15** Life on Land

Impacts of biodiversity loss are being felt across all Earth's major biomes and the cost of inaction is escalating, **demanding increased investment in conservation and sustainable use on a global scale.**

"The Sustainable Development Goals aim to 'leave no one behind'. ***If we don't protect and value biodiversity, we will never achieve this goal.****"*
Erik Solheim, *Executive Director of UN Environment*

Facts and figures



Action

Towards solutions . . .

196 Parties to the **Convention on Biological Diversity**

20 **Aichi Biodiversity Targets** in the **Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020,** which provides a global framework to coordinate efforts to protect and sustainably use biodiversity.

190 Parties that have developed at least one **National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan**

. . . for achieving the SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Proper management of protected areas

Ecosystems management

Improve resource efficiency

Selection and management of the Biodiversity Heritage Sites

Integration of biodiversity and ecosystem services

Marine and Coastal Ecosystem Management

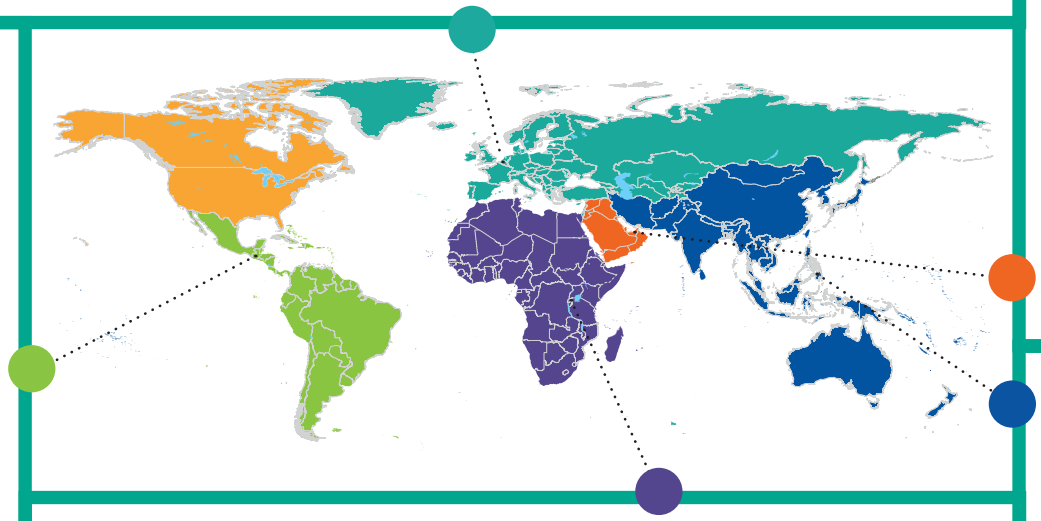
Inititatives on the ground

European ban on harmful pesticides

Bees and other insects pay a vital role in global food production and over 75% of main food crops rely to some extent on animal pollination. In recent years, pollinator populations have plummeted, and a growing body of scientific evidence has linked this decline to the widespread use of pesticides. In April 2018 the European Commission placed a total ban on the outdoor use of three substances known as neonicotinoids, limiting their use to greenhouses where contact with bees is not expected. This ban on demonstrably harmful substances shows an example of regulatory action by policy-makers.

Forest Restoration Mechanism in Guatemala

Between 1991-2001, Guatemala experienced a forest loss equivalent to 73 hectares per year, which corresponds to a deforestation rate of 1.43% per annum. Disturbances to the forest area have generated a permanent disruption in many ecosystems, which has resulted in a reduction by half of the forest cover over half a century, now only 34% of the national territory. In 2014, the Roundtable on Forest Restoration formulated a National Strategy for Forest Landscape Restoration as a mechanism for rural development. It is dependent upon the engagement and commitment of thousands of landowners and communities. Guatemala now has one of the most innovative incentives programmes in the world to support rehabilitation, recovery, reforestation, and restoration of degraded lands, promoting sustainable forest management and safeguarding biodiversity at country scale.



Protected Areas Improve Livelihoods of Local People in Rwanda

The Sabyinyo Community Livelihood Association (SACOLA) was created in 2004 with the objective to improve the lives of populations surrounding the Volcanoes National Park, who were suffering heavily from the consequences of the guerrilla war of 1997-1998, and to protect the National Park against human encroachment and disease transmission from humans to gorillas. By providing jobs, creating community cooperatives, promoting sustainable tourism, profit sharing with surrounding communities and constructing houses for the most vulnerable, SACOLA was able to invest back into the community while safeguarding the mountain gorillas, an example of sustainable biodiversity conservation in and around protected areas.

Advanced habitat mapping in the United Arab Emirates

The Environment Agency-Abu Dhabi (EAD) completed mapping of terrestrial and marine habitats, land use and land cover for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. The project covered the entire Emirate – 59,640 square kilometers of terrestrial and 28,220 square kilometers of marine environments. This is possibly the largest and most detailed delineation of habitats in the world to date. The advanced image processing techniques together with validation through field surveys have resulted in data accuracy, exceeding 90% on the land and 75% in marine areas. This powerful data set will allow environmental decision-making to be much more objective and quantitative. Protected area delineation, environmental permitting, land-use and conservation planning, quantifying ecosystem services, estimating blue carbon, and detecting land degradation and habitat loss, are just some of the areas where the mapping is being utilized

Indigenous Community Conservation Areas in the Philippines

This cost-effective approach to managing key biodiversity and other high conservation and cultural value areas in the Philippines recognizes that indigenous communities have the right to manage their ancestral domains through traditional resources and management practices, as well as define the development and conservation priorities of these ancestral domains. As of 2012, 12% of a total area of about 4.3 million hectares was designated as Approved Ancestral Domain in the Philippines. The approach is recognized to be empowering indigenous communities and fostering conservation, leading to progress towards Aichi Biodiversity Targets 11 (protected areas) and 18 (traditional knowledge).