

Biodiversity is essential, and it is in **danger** Governments have promised to save biodiversity by **2010** It is **time** to move from words to **action**



The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment found nearly two thirds of ecosystem services worldwide in decline, the IUCN Red List covers more than 16.000 endangered species and the average abundance of species has declined by 40% in only thirty years. The Global Biodiversity Outlook concluded that reaching the 2010 biodiversity target would require *'unprecedented additional efforts at national, regional and global levels'*.

In Europe, more than 100 partners ranging from national to local governments, from non-governmental organisations to businesses have started to take up this challenge. They have created Countdown 2010, a powerful network of active partners working together to tackle the causes of biodiversity loss. Each partner commits additional efforts towards the 2010 biodiversity target. Acting together, they create a joint momentum to save biodiversity.

The Countdown 2010 Secretariat – hosted by the World Conservation Union's Regional Office for Europe – facilitates and encourages action, promotes the importance of the 2010 biodiversity target and assesses progress towards 2010.

Governments have promised to save biodiversity by 2010

While 2010 is inexorably coming closer, there are seven priority areas to halt the loss of biodiversity within the next couple of years.

COUNTDOWN
2010
introduces itself

Biodiversity is essential, and it is in danger

When Heads of State committed to *'achieve by 2010 a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biological diversity'* at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, this ambitious 2010 biodiversity target was lauded as a historic step into the right direction.

Since then, several scientific reports have confirmed the gravity of the situation:

COUNTDOWN
2010
SAVE BIODIVERSITY

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No time to lose for biodiversity



1. **Species and ecosystems** need space to develop and recover. At least 10% of all ecosystem types should be under protection to maintain nature and natural landscapes.
2. Without biodiversity there will be no **agriculture**. Farming practices should not jeopardize species survival: Improving farmland diversity and reducing the usage of pesticides and fertiliser are key to saving biodiversity. Organic agriculture practices can serve as an example in many areas.
3. 75% of all **fisheries** are fully exploited or overfished. Species like cod, haddock and halibut are already threatened. If we do not move towards sustainable use, there will be no fish left for our grandchildren.
4. **Roads, factories and housing** destroy habitats for animals and plants. If urban and rural development continues to ignore nature, our surroundings might soon be dominated by concrete and pollution.
5. **Climate change** is considered to be the greatest challenge for humanity. With changing conditions, ecosystems and habitats will change as well. It is an obligation to fight climate change and make sure that species can migrate or adapt to new surroundings.
6. If you release a species outside its usual habitat, it might simply die. In other cases, the so-called '**alien invasive species**' have thrived and destroyed local flora and fauna. As you never know how things turn out, reducing these invasions is crucial.
7. Biodiversity is the **foundation for sustainable development**. Its ecosystem services provide the basis for all economic activity. Biodiversity concerns need thus be integrated into all areas of policy-making. Measures include market incentives, development assistance, biodiversity-friendly trade and international governance processes.

Biodiversity loss impacts core aspects of human well-being, including food security, vulnerability to natural disasters, energy security, and access to clean water and raw materials. It also affects human health, social relations, and freedom of choice. It is thus in humanity's own interest to ensure the survival of species and ecosystems.

It is time to move from words to action

All these ideas are not new. In fact, they mirror demands for which many organisations have campaigned for decades. The political legitimacy of the 2010 biodiversity target now provides a strong joint umbrella to drive this agenda forward.

While it is the responsibility of governments to fulfill the 2010 biodiversity target, the political reality shows that it takes not only committed politicians and officials but also an engaged and informed public to use this opportunity. **The claim of Countdown 2010** is broad and simple, providing the space for organisations to focus their work on the 2010

biodiversity target with the tools and issues that are closest to their own core aims and objectives.

To join the **alliance**, partners undersign a **declaration** stating their extra efforts and an endorsement of Countdown 2010's principles and objectives. The declaration asks three steps from each organization:

1. **Support** the 2010 biodiversity target;
2. **Encourage** decision makers to take action;
3. **Commit** yourself to reducing biodiversity loss.

Engage, join in and help us make it happen

With a powerful network of active partners, Countdown 2010 and its partners can hold governments accountable to: provide sufficient space for nature, use their natural resources in a sustainable manner and consistently reduce pollution. Together, we can make a quantum leap for biodiversity.

Visit countdown2010.net for more information or call us at +32 2 739 0320 to find out how to join!