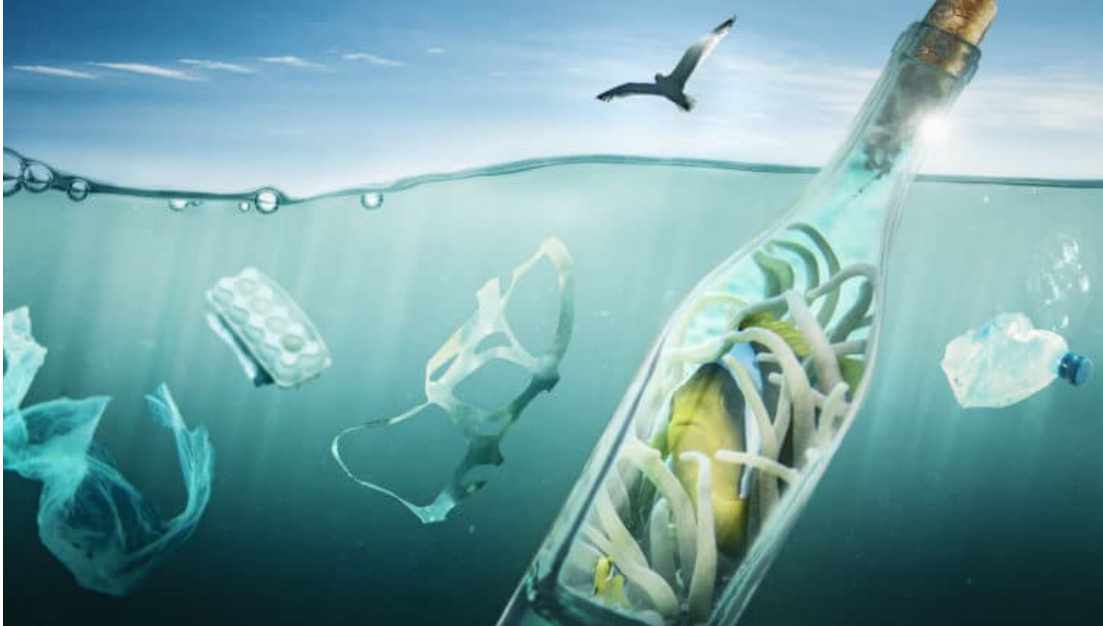


<https://blog.en.erste-am.com/2020-critical-year/>

2020 – the critical year

Gast-AutorIn / Guest Author



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Not many people live to see the world at the threshold of a historically unique shift. But that is exactly where we are right now. Although we have known for many years that we are taking the planet to its limits, the scientific results have never been as clear as today. The drastic decline in animal population as illustrated by the current [Living Planet Report of WWF](#) – i.e. an average of 60% over the past 40 years – is a clear indicator of the pressure that we exert on the planet Earth. It is also a wake-up call that we should not miss.

Tigers, whales, and all the other wonderful species that we hold so dear are not alone on the agenda of environmental and wildlife protection anymore. The stakes have increased. Biodiversity is the network of life that we all depend on. There is no future for us with a climate that is in disequilibrium, overfished rivers and oceans, degraded land, and empty forests.

Species population shrinking

The global community has to act, and one-off measures are not enough any longer. Without a consistent change of direction, the sets of species will continue to shrink, and the harm done to the ecosystems will continue. If we fail to conserve the ecological infrastructure, we have to brace ourselves for serious economic and social repercussions, because scarcer natural resources cause conflicts and destabilise regions.

We need a bold change of direction, and we need it now. We have to switch to a CO₂-neutral economy and halt the decline of diversity. At the same time, we have to preserve enough land and water in their natural state or manage to put them back into that state. This requires bold decision-making and real behavioural adjustments.

Only few people have the opportunity to be part of historical change. 2020 will be a critical year. The world will measure the progress in sustainable development on the basis of three goals: the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the 2020 Convention on Biodiversity, and the Paris Agreement. This would be the right moment for a global agreement by which we outline the future path for ourselves and our world.

Government, civil society, companies, finance, science, and every one of us: it is up to us – and we should not hesitate any longer. The window of opportunity will not be open much longer.

Disclaimer:

Forecasts are not a reliable indicator for future developments.

Guest commentary by Andrea Johanides, CEO WWF Austria

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Gast-AutorIn / Guest Author