



# ISCB Newsletter

## Vol. 4



### LIVING PLANET REPORT

A (very worrying) summary of the report as written by *Itai Namir*

See page 2



### Abstract Submission for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Israeli Conference for Conservation is OPEN!

The biannual meeting will take place at the [Technion Israel Institute of Technology](#), 16-17 April 2019.

Abstract submission deadline: [January 31<sup>st</sup>](#)!

See you this Spring!



### PLASTICS

Spotlight on plastics: What can Israel learn from the EU? ISCB interviewed the EU delegation's Head of Trade and Economics to find out.

See interview on Page 3

Who are  
the  
Keynote  
Speakers  
?

Publications,  
Announcements and  
more after a special  
commentary on the  
whaling decision – as  
written by Capt. Paul  
Watson!  
Pages 5-6

The meeting will feature two internationally recognized keynote lecturers – [Professor Kevin Gaston](#) of the University of Exeter (UK) and [Professor Dagmar Haase](#) of Humboldt Universität zu Berlin and Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research - UFZ (Germany).

In addition, the meeting will include a variety of panel discussions on conservation biology in Israel and globally, research talks, poster sessions, and additional events. Students, researchers, and practitioners are invited to submit abstracts for talks and posters.

A special panel session will be dedicated to excellent student research (with the potential to positively affect biological conservation in Israel) instructions for entering the competition are found on the conference website).

# The Living Planet Report 2018: Aiming Higher



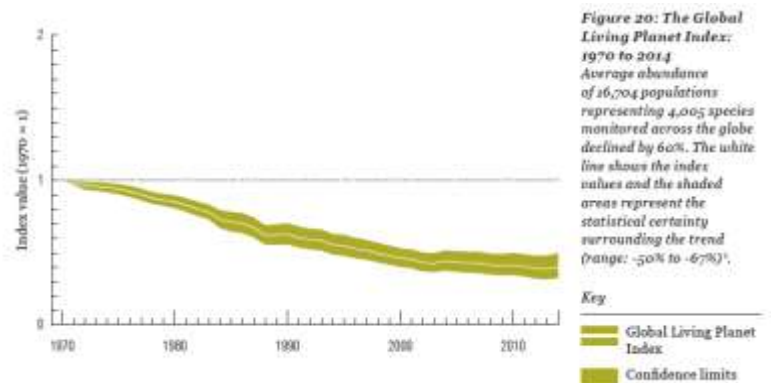
Author: Itai Namir

In the end of 2018, WWF published their twelfth, bi-annual report on the status of biodiversity, highlighting the importance of global conservation efforts. Their message is clear: unsustainable human activity is pushing the planet's natural systems that support life on Earth to the edge. In the 1950s, the Great Acceleration began to dramatically increase the global human population by improving our quality of life, leading to an increase in the demand for energy, land, water, and increasing overall consumption. The products we consume, the supply chains behind them, the raw materials and export routes we use all have a significant impact on the environment. Scientists now claim that the Holocene period has ended and we entered a new era, the "Anthropocene".

Through data collection, tracking and analysis tools, specific impacts on biodiversity can be monitored. In addition, it is important to understand the different threats between different regions and how different species are affected by them in different ways.

The Living Planet Index (LPI), provided by the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), is an indicator of the current state of global biodiversity, based on trends in vertebrate populations from around the world. The index shows a general decline of 60% in population sizes from 1970- 2014 (Fig 20). The decline is especially evident in the tropics, with South and Central America experiencing a dramatic decline of 89% in population sizes since 1970. Freshwater species have also declined dramatically; 83% since 1970. Measuring biodiversity on Earth is complex, so this report also examines three other indicators, measuring changes in species distribution, extinction risks and changes in community composition. All of these draw the same picture - showing sharp drops or changes.

The report listed habitat degradation, unsustainable exploitation of resources, invasive species and climate change as the main causes of the declines in biodiversity we see today (Figure 15). This latest assessment found that only one quarter of the earth is not currently being exploited by man. In the marine system, 6 million tons of fish have been removed

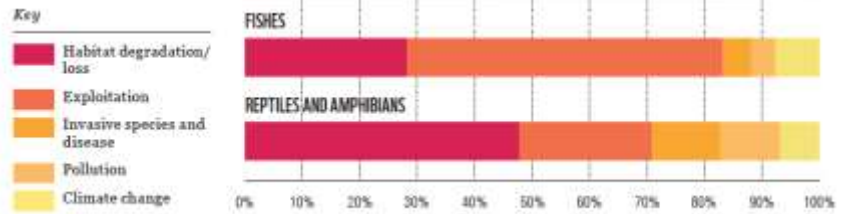


from the oceans since the 1950s. Plastic is now found in all marine systems, from the coasts to the depths, with an estimate of between 4.8 to 12.7 million tonnes of land-based plastic waste entering the ocean in 2010 alone (Jambeck et al 2015).

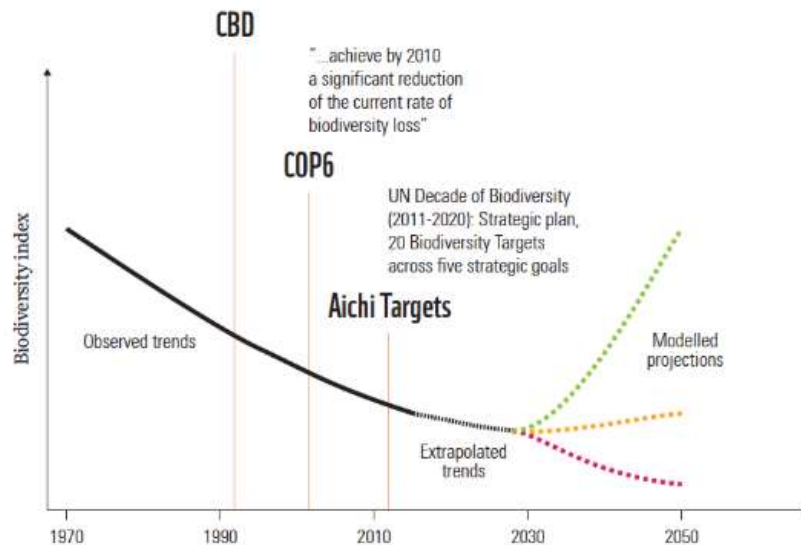
Today, ecosystem services to humans are estimated at \$ 125 trillion a year, including pollination, pharmaceutical production, clean water availability, renewable energies, biomimicry and more. The current Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) vision is that “By 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people”. The report stresses that achieving this ambitious goal will require changes that come from governments, businesses, research, civil society as well as from personal choices and actions. The window of opportunity must be exploited in order to change the trajectory of biodiversity trends, by defining new targets for beyond 2020 and developing sustainable industries.

Without a dramatic shift in global governance, the sharp decline of the natural systems supporting the Earth and the human population will continue. There is still some hope; modelling of trajectories suggest that there is still time to turn trends around (Figure 27). The good news is that governments and industries are beginning to ask how changes in the environment will affect the activities of their industries and financial markets. The question remains will they act quickly enough.

**Figure 25: Relative frequency of major threats by taxonomic group**  
Threat data is available for 3,789 populations in the global LPI database. Each of these populations could be associated with up to three different threats. There were 6,053 threats recorded in all<sup>10</sup>.




“Develop national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity; Integrate [...] the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies”



**Figure 27: Biodiversity declines have continued despite repeated policy commitments aimed at slowing or halting the rate of loss (redrawn from Mace et al. 2018<sup>11</sup>).**





“Rewilding is not about abandoning civilization but about enhancing it. It is to ‘love not man the less, but Nature more’.”

– George Monbiot,  
*Feral*

## Spotlight on the EU delegation

Leigh Allison Kroeger interviews *Sàndor SZELEKOVSZKY of the Delegation of the European Union to the State of Israel.*

Mr. Sandor Szelekovszky is currently the First Counsellor and Head of the Trade and Economic Section, of the EU delegation to Israel. The overall aim of the delegation is to enhance relations of the EU with Israel and specifically that of Mr. Szelekovszky’s section is to promote economic cooperation in areas such as trade, agriculture, energy, transport etc. He obtained his degree in International Relations at the University of Budapest, Hungary and is an official of the European Commission. He was posted as an EU diplomate to Israel more than three years ago. As an integral part of the anti-plastics strategy in Europe, he acknowledged that establishing the right regulatory framework and incentives as well as raising awareness were an important in reducing plastic litter and promoting sustainable consumption an production patterns. As for the efforts in Israelhe feels that the focus should be on creating the necessary regulations. In addition, he recommended increasing incentive measures to encourage consumers shift their preferences, reduce plastic consumption, and lead a more sustainable life at home. Overall the fight against plastics is progressing, with the most promising EU legislation just released over December on an EU-wide ban on single-use plastics coming in to action in 2021. We thank Sandor for his continuing advocacy in this prescient conservation topic!

# A (rare) positive commentary on Japan's decision to withdraw from the IWC

*Japan has controversially decided to withdraw from the International Whaling Commission and will now switch back to commercial whaling. While the international community abhors this decision, we present here a uniquely positive take on the development, written by the captain of the Sea Shepherd. This 'lawless' organisation have divided conservationists for many years for their patrolling, halting, and sabotaging the research whaling efforts in the Southern Ocean.*

## **Sea Shepherd Statement from Capt. Paul Watson**

Sea Shepherd is pleased to see that Japan is considering withdrawing from the I.W.C. and will openly hunt whales commercially. Commercial whaling is absolutely forbidden in the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary and commercial whaling anywhere is illegal. This means that the IWC will pass the resolution to create the South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary. This means that Japan is now openly declaring their illegal whaling activities. No more pretense [sic] of research whaling. With this announcement Japan has declared themselves as a pirate whaling nation. This will make Sea Shepherd's objective of shutting down these poachers much easier.

## **Why is this a positive Development**

Because Japan has never stopped commercial whaling. They have 'hidden' it behind the excuse of so called 'scientific whaling' since 1987. They have continued commercial whaling despite the International Court of Justice ruling that there is no legal justification for their so-called 'scientific whaling.' Now there can be no façade, Japan has joined Norway and Iceland in their open defiance of international conservation law. All three nations are pirate whaling nations.

2. With Japan out of the International Whaling Commission, the IWC can now pass the South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary. The IWC can now focus on conservation instead of whaling. Japan has been the single greatest detriment to the IWC during its entire history.
3. The Japanese puppet nations will no longer be obligated to vote against conservation and without Japanese bribes, many will simply quit the IWC. Mongolia for example has absolutely no connection to whaling historically or practically.
4. The IWC can now vote to condemn industrial commercial whaling.
5. Japan will not be able to kill whales in the Southern Ocean. It is an internationally established whale sanctuary and the only reason Japan has been able to flaunt the law is by invoking the excuse of 'scientific research whaling.' Overt commercial whaling is strictly prohibited in the Southern Ocean and Japan has indicated it will quit the Southern Ocean while expanding whaling in the North Pacific. This would mean that the current whaling season in Antarctic waters will be the last.
6. Japan will be able to withdraw from the Southern Ocean without losing face.
7. Opposition to illegal Japanese commercial whaling will be easier. Basically, we will be dealing with poachers. Japan will no longer be able to pretend that their commercial whaling is research whaling.
8. Sea Shepherd's objective to end whaling in the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary will have been met.

The last time Sea Shepherd engaged with the Japanese whaling fleet in the Southern Ocean was for the 2016/2017 whaling season. We sent the Ocean Warrior and the Steve Irwin. Japan countered with multi-million dollar military grade surveillance making it impossible for Sea Shepherd to close in on their operations. Sea Shepherd has been unable to compete with such a massive security investment on the part of Japan. On the positive side, Japan has been forced to expend a great deal of money on security each year to maintain this edge.

Sea Shepherd's relentless opposition to Japanese whaling in the Southern Ocean since 2002 has been a major factor in undermining Japanese whaling activities. It has cost the whalers and the Japanese government tens of millions of dollars and saved the lives of over 6,000 whales.

A whaling free Southern Ocean has been our objective for two decades and if Japan moves forward with their threat to withdraw from the IWC and to resume overt commercial whaling, this objective will be realized.

**Readers... what's your opinion??**



## Publications

**We want to hear from you! If you would like to write an article for the ISCB, send us your conservation news or research updates to be included in our next newsletter.**

Saltz, D., Berger-Tal, O., Motro, U., Shkedy, Y. & Raanan, N. 2019. Conservation implications of habitation in Nubian ibex in response to ecotourism. *Animal Conservation*, doi: 10.1111/acv.12456

Shabtay, A., Portman, M.E., Manea, E. & Gissi, E. 2019. Promoting ancillary conservation through marine spatial planning. *Science of the Total Environment*, **651**:1753-1763. doi: 10.1016/j.scitotenv.2018.10.074

Cohen, O., Gamliel, A., Katan, J., Kurzbaum, E., Riov, J. and Bar, P., 2018. Controlling the seed bank of the invasive plant *Acacia saligna*: comparison of the efficacy of prescribed burning, soil solarization, and their combination. *Biological Invasions*, **20**, pp.2875-2887.

Kopler, I. & Malkinson, D. 2018. Differential response of mammals to agricultural fences – the effects of species vagility and body size. *Basic and Applied Ecology*, **33**:79-88. doi:10.1016/j.baae.2018.08.010

Fan, J., Meng, J., Ashkenazy, Y., Havlin, S. and Schellnhuber, H.J., 2018. Climate network percolation reveals the expansion and weakening of the tropical component under global warming. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, **115**(52), pp.E12128-E12134.

Pickholtz, R.S., Kiflawi, M., Friedlander, A.M. and Belmaker, J., 2018. Habitat utilization by an invasive herbivorous fish (*Siganus rivulatus*) in its native and invaded range. *Biological Invasions*, **20**(12), pp.3499-3512.

Salman, I.N.A. & Blaustein, L. 2018. Vegetation cover drives arthropod communities in Mediterranean/subtropical green roof habitats. *Sustainability*, **10**:4209. doi: 10.3390/su10114209

# Announcements

## **Help SCB Prevent & Address Sexual Harassment & Violence**

*Anti-Sexual Harassment & Violence Task Force Moves to Phase II; Seeks Volunteers by 19 Jan*

Message Leigh ([scb.israel2014@gmail.com](mailto:scb.israel2014@gmail.com)) or Uri ([uri.roll@gmail.com](mailto:uri.roll@gmail.com)) for more information to join the task force for anti-sexual harassment in the SCB.

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50<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Israeli Sociological Society! More details and registration may be found [embedded in this link](#)