



## WWF: What We Do

### PREPARE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

Mangroves are trees and shrubs that grow in coastal areas. The planting of mangroves keeps rivers healthy and release important nutrients into the water. They protect shorelines in the Coral Triangle from storm surges and erosion, which are essential in the face of future climate change impacts. WWF supports mangrove reforestation in many areas to reduce coastal communities' vulnerability to climate change impacts. There are other added benefits as well. For example, mangrove nurseries provide income to local communities in Papua New Guinea. The replanted mangroves in the Philippines have led to the return of juvenile fish and crab species, improved water quality, and increased wildlife populations.

WWF also works to protect marine areas from overfishing and other stresses so that they have a better chance of recovering from climate change impacts such as coral bleaching. Some fish can actually help coral reefs recover after damage from bleaching events. As corals try to rebuild, they compete for space with seaweed. Colorful parrotfish graze on seaweed, which gives corals more room to grow and repopulate. The humphead wrasse also helps coral reefs recover; these enormous fish feed on crown-of-thorn starfish, which eat corals.

### CREATE PROTECTED AREAS

WWF works to create a network of marine protected areas (MPAs) in the Coral Triangle. MPAs protect coral reefs and sea grass beds from destructive fishing practices and other unsustainable activities. They also allow damaged areas to recover, which is important for resilience against climate change. Protected areas allow fish to reproduce and grow to their adult size. This enables depleted fish populations to recover and increases fish catches in surrounding fishing waters. They provide refuge for other marine species too, such as endangered marine turtles and dugongs. WWF works to ensure protected areas are designed and managed well. We monitor fish spawning areas and the health of coral reefs, and study the impacts of protected areas on local communities.

### PROTECT MARINE TURTLES

WWF works to protect turtle nesting beaches and supports the monitoring of nest sites by local rangers. We create local awareness of the threats marine turtles face and work with local communities to reduce turtle harvesting and local trade. Exploitation of turtles is often driven by a lack of economic choices. WWF works to develop alternative livelihoods so that local people are no longer dependent on turtle products for income.

We also work to reduce bycatch of turtles in fishing gear through promotion of "circle" hooks and turtle excluder devices in nets.

### REDUCE BYCATCH



To reduce bycatch—the accidental capture of non-target marine animals in fishing gear—WWF promotes the use of alternative fishing hooks ("circle" hooks) and advocates for the use of special devices that exclude turtles from fishing nets. So far, WWF is having great results testing circle hooks in Papua New Guinea. Bycatch has been reduced and fishermen find the new hooks perform better than traditional hooks. We also aim to secure stronger policies and regulations on bycatch throughout the Coral Triangle so that alternative fishing gear can become standard practice across the region.



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## Spike In Illegal Wildlife Trade

The world is dealing with an unprecedented spike in illegal wildlife trade, threatening to overturn decades of conservation gains. Ivory estimated to weigh more than 23 metric tons—a figure that represents 2,500 elephants—was seized in the 13 largest seizures of illegal ivory in 2011. Poaching threatens the last of our wild tigers that number as few as 3,200.

Wildlife crime is a big business. Run by dangerous international networks, wildlife and animal parts are trafficked much like illegal drugs and arms. By its very nature, it is almost impossible to obtain reliable figures for the value of illegal wildlife trade. Experts at TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network, estimate that it runs into hundreds of millions of dollars.

Some examples of illegal wildlife trade are well known, such as poaching of elephants for ivory and tigers for their skins and bones. Countless other species are similarly overexploited, from marine turtles to timber trees. Not all wildlife trade is illegal. Wild plants and animals from tens of thousands of species are caught or harvested from the wild and then sold legitimately as food, pets, ornamental plants, leather, tourist ornaments and medicine. Wildlife trade escalates into a crisis when an increasing proportion is illegal and unsustainable—directly threatening the survival of many species in the wild.

Stamping out wildlife crime is a priority for WWF because it's the largest direct threat to the future of many of the world's most threatened species. It is second only to habitat destruction in overall threats against species survival.



**"Stamping out Wildlife crime is a priority of WWF"**

## Species of the Month

### Elephant



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