

International civil society organizations and risks related to global interactions (1)

AN ENVIRONMENTAL CIVIL SOCIETY: THE WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE



The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) is an international environmental non-governmental organization (NGO), or civil society. It was founded in 1961 with the aim of preserving wilderness areas and the species that inhabited them, and reducing the human impact on the environment.

The WWF is the world's largest conservation civil society, working in over 1,300 projects in more than 100 countries, and with over 5 million supporters worldwide. WWF's mission statement is "to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature".

The WWF's first manifesto stated that it needed "money, to carry out missions and to meet conservation emergencies by buying land where wildlife treasures are threatened, money ... to pay guardians of wildlife refuges ... [and] for education".

Its initial focus on protecting endangered species broadened into other areas, including preserving biodiversity, sustainable use of resources, reducing pollution, and climate change.

In the 1990s the WWF changed its mission statement to "stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature" by:

- conserving the world's biological diversity
- ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable
- promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

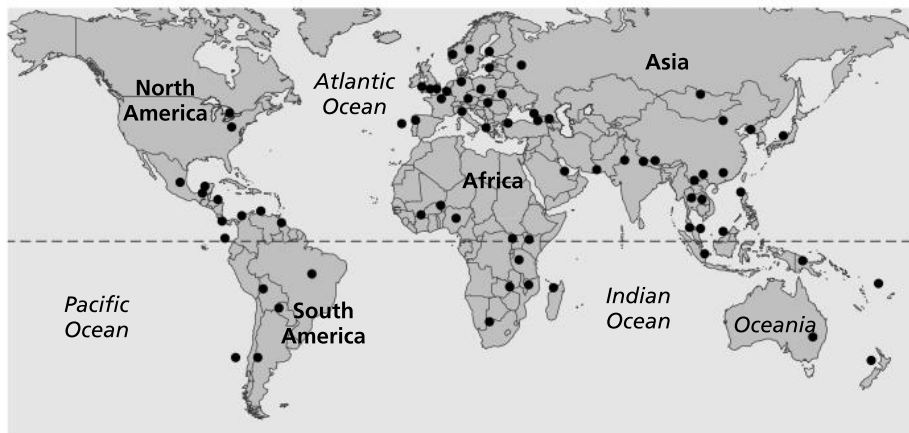
The WWF's current strategy is to:

- restore populations of keystone species, species that are important for their ecosystem or people, including elephants and whales
- reduce ecological footprints.

The WWF gets involved in many projects but also voices opinions on developments. For example, it has been a critic of the Canadian tar sands programme. From 2008–10 the WWF published reports that concluded that the tar sands programme could contribute significantly to climate change, that carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology was not as effective for tar sands as for other forms of oil, and that the development of the tar sands represented a major risk to caribou herds in Alberta.

CRITICISMS OF WWF

Critics argue that the WWF is too close to some large companies, such as Coca-Cola and IKEA. Wilfried Huismann's documentary *Silence of the Pandas* (2011) criticized WWF's involvement with TNCs responsible for destruction of the natural environment. In 2016 Survival International complained that the WWF was using eco-guardians who had abused the rights of indigenous people in the Cameroon rainforest. WWF denied the allegations.



WWF offices around the world

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

23. Outline the mission statement of the WWF.
24. Comment on the criticisms about WWF.