Wildlife populations fell 73% on average in 52 years – WWF Living Planet Report 2026

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News

WWF's Living Planet Report 2026 (7 Oct 2026) found that monitored vertebrate populations (mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, fish) fell by an average of 73% over the 52 years from 1970 to 2022. The Living Planet Index (LPI), produced by the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), tracked 35,803 population trends of 5,790 species.

Key facts

Average decline	73% (1970–2022)
Scope	5,790 species, 35,803 population trends
By ecosystem	Freshwater 85%, terrestrial 69%, marine 59%
By region	Latin America & Caribbean 95%, Africa 80%, Asia-Pacific 49%, North America 28%, Europe & Central Asia 23%
Hope	Recoveries in tigers, southern African elephants, green turtles, bluefin tuna
Note	An average proportional change – not the total number of animals lost

Background

- WWF was founded in 1961 in Switzerland (HQ Gland); its logo is the panda. The Living Planet Report has come out since 1998, usually every two years.
- Causes: habitat loss (mainly land converted to farming) leads; then overexploitation, invasive species, disease, climate change and pollution.
- Treaties: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD, 1992, Rio); the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (2022) with its '30x30' goal – protect 30% of land and sea by 2030.
- India: the Biological Diversity Act 2002 – National Biodiversity Authority (Chennai). India is one of 17 megadiverse countries with 4 biodiversity hotspots (Himalaya, Western Ghats, Indo-Burma, Sundaland). India's tigers: 3,682 (2022).

Tamil Nadu link: the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) is in Chennai. Tamil Nadu has the most Ramsar wetlands of any Indian State; the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (1986) was India's first.

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