

## Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)

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### **Strict Embargo – Check Against Delivery**

Friday, 8 July 2022

1.30 p.m. (Berlin Time - CEST) / 7.30 a.m. (US EDT) / 12.30 p.m. (London-BST)  
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- Summary for Policymakers, photos, ‘B-roll’, other media resources: <https://bit.ly/SUAMediaPack>
- Media release also available in French: <https://bit.ly/SUAFrench> & Spanish: <https://bit.ly/SUASpanish>
- Media launch webcast live from #IPBES9 (Bonn, Germany): <https://bit.ly/SustUseLaunch> starts at 1.30 p.m. (Berlin time – CEST) / 7.30 a.m. (US EDT) / 12.30 p.m. (London – BST)
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### ***50,000 Wild Species Meet Needs of Billions Worldwide Experts Offer Options to Ensure Sustainable Use***

***1 in 5 People Rely on Wild Species for Income & Food  
>10,000 Wild Species Harvested for Human Food  
2.4 Billion (1 in 3) Depend on Fuel Wood for Cooking***

Billions of people, in developed and developing nations, benefit daily from the use of wild species for food, energy, materials, medicine, recreation, inspiration and many other vital contributions to human well-being. The accelerating [global biodiversity crisis](#), with a million species of plants and animals facing extinction, threatens these contributions to people.

A new report by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services ([IPBES](#)) offers insights, analysis and tools to establish more sustainable use of wild species of plants, animals, fungi and algae around the world. Sustainable use is when biodiversity and ecosystem functioning are maintained while contributing to human well-being.

The IPBES Assessment Report on the Sustainable Use of Wild Species is the result of four years of work by 85 leading experts from the natural and social sciences, and holders of indigenous and local knowledge, as well as 200 contributing authors, drawing on more than 6,200 sources. The summary of the Report was approved this week by representatives of the 139 member States of IPBES in Bonn, Germany.

“With about 50,000 wild species used through different practices, including more than 10,000 wild species harvested directly for human food, rural people in developing countries are most at risk from unsustainable use, with lack of complementary alternatives often forcing them to further exploit wild species already at risk,” said Dr. Jean-Marc Fromentin (France), who co-chaired the Assessment with Dr. Marla R. Emery (USA/Norway) and Prof. John Donaldson (South Africa).

“70% of the world’s poor are directly dependent on wild species. One in five people rely on wild plants, algae and fungi for their food and income; 2.4 billion rely on fuel wood for cooking and about 90% of the 120 million people working in capture fisheries are supported by small-scale fishing,” said Dr. Emery. “But the regular use of wild species is extremely important not only in the Global South. From the fish that we eat, to medicines, cosmetics, decoration and recreation, wild species’ use is much more prevalent than most people realise.”

The use of wild species is an important source of income for millions of people worldwide. Wild tree species account for two thirds of global industrial roundwood; trade in wild plants, algae and fungi is a billion-dollar industry; and even non-extractive uses of wild species are big business. Tourism, based on observing wild species, is one of the main reasons that, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, protected areas globally received 8 billion visitors and generated US\$600 billion every year.

The Report identifies five broad categories of ‘practices’ in the use of wild species: fishing; gathering; logging; terrestrial animal harvesting (including hunting); and non-extractive practices, such as observing. For each practice, it then examines specific ‘uses’ such as for food and feed; materials; medicine, energy; recreation; ceremony; learning and decoration – providing a detailed analysis of the trends in each, over the past 20 years. In most cases, use of wild species has increased, but sustainability of use has varied, such as in gathering for medicine and logging for materials and energy.

Speaking specifically about fishing as an example, Dr. Fromentin said: “Recent global estimates confirm that about 34% of marine wild fish stocks are overfished and 66% are fished within biologically sustainable levels – but within this global picture there are significant local and contextual variations. Countries with robust fisheries management have seen stocks increasing in abundance. The Atlantic bluefin tuna population, for instance, has been rebuilt and is now fished within sustainable levels. For countries and regions with low intensity fisheries management measures, however, the status of stocks is often poorly known, but generally believed to be below the abundance that would maximise sustainable food production. Many small-scale fisheries are unsustainable or only partially sustainable, especially in Africa for both inland and marine fisheries, and in Asia, Latin America and Europe for coastal fisheries.”

“Overexploitation is one of the main threats to the survival of many land-based and aquatic species in the wild”, said Prof. Donaldson. “Addressing the causes of unsustainable use and, wherever possible reversing these trends, will result in better outcomes for wild species and the people who depend on them.”

The survival of an estimated 12% of wild tree species is threatened by unsustainable logging; unsustainable gathering is one of the main threats for several plant groups, notably cacti, cycads and orchids, and unsustainable hunting has been identified as a threat for 1,341 wild mammal species – with declines in large-bodied species that have low natural rates of increase also linked to hunting pressure.

The Report identifies drivers such as land- and seascape changes; climate change; pollution and invasive alien species that impact the abundance and distribution of wild species, and can increase stress and challenges among the human communities that use them. Global trade in wild species has expanded substantially in volume, value and trade networks over the past four decades.

While trade in wild species provides important income for exporting countries, offers higher incomes for harvesters, and can diversify sources of supply to allow pressure to be redirected from species being unsustainably used, it also decouples the consumption of wild species from their places of origin. The Report finds that without effective regulation across supply chains – from local to global – global trade of wild species generally increases pressures on wild species, leading to unsustainable use and sometimes to wild population collapses (e.g., shark fin trade).

Illegal use and illegal trade in wild species are also addressed in the Report – as this occurs across all of the practices and often leads to unsustainable use. The authors find that illegal trade in wild species represents the third largest class of all illegal trade – with estimated annual values of up to US\$199 billion. Timber and fish make up the largest volumes and value of illegal trade in wild species.

As part of its analysis, the Report explores policies and tools that have been used in a variety of contexts with regard to the sustainable use of wild species. Seven key elements are presented, that could be used as levers of change to promote sustainable use of wild species if they are scaled-up across practices, regions and sectors:

- Policy options that are inclusive and participatory
- Policy options that recognise and support multiple forms of knowledge
- Policy instruments & tools that ensure fair & equitable distribution of costs & benefits
- Context-specific policies
- Monitoring of wild species and practices
- Policy instruments that are aligned at international, national, regional and local levels; maintain coherence & consistency with international obligations & take into account customary rules and norms
- Robust institutions, including customary institutions

The use of wild species by indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as their extensive knowledge, practices and beliefs about such uses, are also explored in the Report. Indigenous peoples manage fishing, gathering, terrestrial animal harvesting and other uses of wild species on more than 38 million km<sup>2</sup> of land, equivalent to about 40% of terrestrial conserved areas, in 87 countries. The Report finds that policies supporting secure tenure rights and equitable access to land, fisheries and forests, as well as poverty alleviation, create enabling conditions for sustainable use of wild species.

“Indigenous stewardship of biodiversity is often embedded in local knowledge, practices and spirituality,” said Dr. Emery. “The sustainable use of wild species is central to the identity and existence of many indigenous peoples and local communities. These practices and cultures are diverse, but there are common values including the obligation to engage nature with respect, reciprocate for what is taken, avoid waste, manage harvests and ensure the fair and equitable distribution of benefits from wild species for community well-being. Globally, deforestation is generally lower on indigenous territories, in particular where there is security of land tenure, continuity of knowledge and languages, and alternative livelihoods. Bringing scientists and indigenous peoples together to learn from each other will strengthen the sustainable use of wild species. This is especially important because most national frameworks and international agreements largely continue to emphasize ecological and some social considerations, including economic and governance issues – while cultural contexts receive little attention.”

The Report concludes by examining a range of possible future scenarios for the use of wild species, confirming that climate change, increasing demand and technological advances - making many extractive practices more efficient – are likely to present significant challenges to sustainable use in the future. Actions are identified for each practice that would help to address these challenges. In fishing, this would include fixing current inefficiencies; reducing illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; suppressing harmful financial subsidies; supporting small-scale fisheries; adapting to changes in oceanic productivity due to climate change; and proactively creating effective transboundary institutions. In logging this would entail management and certification of forests for multiple uses; technological innovations to reduce waste in manufacturing of wood products; and economic and political initiatives that recognize the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, including land tenure.

In most future scenarios that enable the sustainable use of wild species, the authors find that transformative changes share common characteristics – such as integration of plural value systems; equitable distribution of costs and benefits; changes in social values, cultural norms and preferences; and effective institutions and governance systems. Ambitious goals are found to be necessary but not sufficient to drive transformative change. The Report also notes that the world is dynamic, and that sustainable use of wild species requires constant negotiation and adaptive management. It also requires a common vision of sustainable use and transformative change in human-nature relationships.

Speaking about the importance of the Report, Dr. Anne Larigauderie, Executive Secretary of IPBES said: “This Assessment was specifically requested by, among others, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora ([CITES](#)) and will inform decisions about trade in wild species at the 19th World Wildlife Conference in Panama in November. It also has immediate relevance to the work of the Convention on Biological Diversity to forge a new global biodiversity framework for the next decade – not least because of the findings about the untapped potential of the sustainable use of wild species to contribute even more to many of the Sustainable Development Goals, including those on poverty, hunger, good health and well-being, education, gender equity, clean water and sanitation, affordable energy, as well as industry and innovation. We thank and congratulate all the authors and experts for their tireless work – especially throughout the COVID pandemic. The sustainable use of wild species is vital for all people, in all communities – and this Report will help decision-makers around the world choose policies and actions that better support people and nature.”

- **ENDS** -

**Please note: This French/Spanish version of the media release is being provided as a courtesy translation for media. It is possible that some terminology may still change, based on official translations to still be completed. In the event of a discrepancy between this version and the English version of the media release, the English version should be regarded as definitive.**

***Values of Biodiversity Assessment Report launch: Monday 11 July***

***A 2nd IPBES Assessment Report on how to effectively reflect the diverse values of nature in decision-making will also be launched from #IPBES9, Bonn, on Mon. 11 July at 14:00 CEST.***

***Four years in development by 82 leading experts from 47 countries, and drawing on more than 13,000 references, the purpose, scope, structure and other information about the report is described in a primer available at <https://bit.ly/3yDS3s0>.***

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## Note to Editors:

For enquiries and interviews please contact:

The IPBES Media Team

[media@ipbes.net](mailto:media@ipbes.net)

[www.ipbes.net](http://www.ipbes.net)

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IPBES has now released the Summary for Policymakers (SPM) of the Sustainable Use of Wild Species report. The SPM presents the key messages and policy options, as approved by the IPBES Plenary. To access the SPM, photos, 'B-roll' and other media resources go to: <https://bit.ly/SUAMediaPack> The full six-chapter Report (including all data) will be published later this year.

### **About IPBES:**

Often described as the "IPCC for biodiversity", IPBES is an independent intergovernmental body comprising 139 member Governments. Established by Governments in 2012, it provides policymakers with objective scientific assessments about the state of knowledge regarding the planet's biodiversity, ecosystems and the contributions they make to people, as well as the tools and methods to protect and sustainably use these vital natural assets. For more information about IPBES and its assessments visit [www.ipbes.net](http://www.ipbes.net)

**Video introduction to IPBES:** [www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOiGio7YU-M](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOiGio7YU-M)

### **Additional videos:**

- **IPBES Global Assessment of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (2019):**  
<https://youtu.be/7eYK5ibTOMA>
- **IPBES Assessment of Land Degradation and Restoration (2018):**  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=KCt7aai17Nk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KCt7aai17Nk)
- **IPBES Regional Assessments of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (2018):**  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=kR0HeepbWCc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kR0HeepbWCc)
- **IPBES Assessment of Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production (2016):**  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=YwkYbeiwK5A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YwkYbeiwK5A)
- **IPBES Assessment of Scenarios and Models of Biodiversity (2016):**  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZfcDmtGa9I](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZfcDmtGa9I)

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## By the Numbers – Key Statistics and Facts from the Report

- +/-50,000: wild species used for food, energy, medicine, material and other purposes through fishing, gathering, logging and terrestrial animal harvesting globally
- At least 34%: species that are sustainably used – based on assessment of 10,098 species from 10 taxonomic groups on IUCN Red List
- +/-7,500: species of wild fish and aquatic invertebrates directly used by people all over the world; 31,100 species of wild plants, of which 7,400 are trees; 1,500 species of fungi; 7,400 species of wild trees; 1,700 species of wild land-based invertebrates; and 7,500 species of wild amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals
- >10,000: wild species harvested for human food, making sustainable use of wild species critical for food security & improving nutrition in rural and urban areas worldwide
- +/-70%: of the world's poor directly dependant on wild species and on businesses fostered by them
- 8 billion: annual visitors to protected areas worldwide prior to COVID-19 pandemic, generated US\$600 billion per year, with the highest levels of tourist visitors in species-rich countries
- 38 million: km<sup>2</sup> of land across 87 countries on which indigenous peoples manage fishing, gathering, terrestrial animal harvesting and other uses of wild species (coincides with +/-40% of terrestrial conserved areas, including many with high biodiversity value)
- 15: number of the Sustainable Development Goals to which sustainable use of wild species has unacknowledged potential to contribute to achievement of the targets
  
- >90%: of the 120 million people engaged in capture fisheries globally that are supported by small-scale fishing - about half of them are women
- 34%: marine wild fish stocks that are overfished (with 66% fished within biologically sustainable levels, but this global picture displays strong heterogeneities)
- 90 million: tons of wild fish caught annually in recent decades, of which about two thirds go to human food (and the rest as feed for aquaculture and livestock)
- 99%: species of sharks and rays officially declared taken incidentally as by-catch, but valuable and often retained for food, causing steep declines since the 1970s in shark species, especially in tropical and subtropical coastal shelf waters
- 449: species of sharks and rays classified as threatened (37.5% of 1,199 species recently assessed), mostly due to unsustainable fishing
  
- 2.4 billion: people (approximately one third of humanity) that rely on fuel wood for cooking); 880 million log firewood or produce charcoal, particularly in developing countries
- 50%: of all wood consumed globally is logged for energy, 90% in Africa. Use of fuel wood is declining in most regions but increasing in sub-Saharan Africa
- 1.1 billion: people without access to electricity or alternative energy sources and who rely on fuel wood logging
- >25%: world's forests subject to industrial logging
- Two thirds: of global industrial roundwood provided by wild tree species
- +/-20%: world's tropical forests (3.9 million km<sup>2</sup>) currently subject to selective logging
- 12%: wild tree species threatened by unsustainable logging
- 15%: proportion of global forests managed as community resources by indigenous peoples and local communities, often with a strong focus on multiple use management
- +/-29%: of about 10,000 near-threatened and threatened species from 10 taxonomic groups, for which unsustainable harvest contributes to elevated risk of extinction
  
- +/-1.4 million: km<sup>2</sup> of Africa managed for recreational hunting (but unique biodiversity values and ecological and social durability have mostly not been evaluated)
- 55%-75%: wild meat biomass derived annually from hunting of large mammals

- 1,341: wild mammal species threatened by unsustainable hunting, including 669 species already assessed as threatened
- 40: years during which global trade of wild species has increased substantially
- 4%-68%: individuals and households in Europe & North America that participate in gathering (highest in Eastern Europe), often irrespective of economic status
- >50%: trade in fish, birds, amphibians and plants derived from farmed sources as a result of a shift from use of wild species
- 38,700: species listed by 2021 under CITES and subjected to regulation by Parties (with trade in the majority of listed species deemed by Parties to be sustainable)
- 101: countries with legislation and institutions to fully implement CITES; with a further 43 that can partially implement it
- US\$69-199 billion: annual value of illegal trade in wild species (especially timber and fish), representing the world's third largest class of illegal trade

## IPBES Partner Comments

“Fifty years ago, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was created to address concerns that international trade in wildlife was becoming unsustainable and needed regulation. It was recognized that wild animals and plants are an irreplaceable part of Earth’s natural systems, and they must be conserved. Fifty years later, sustainability is more important than ever.

In November, CITES will hold the 19th World Wildlife Conference in Panama. The Parties to the Convention will be making decisions that are crucial for species, and biodiversity, conservation. I’m sure they will see this Assessment Report as a considerable resource, helping to underpin their future work with the latest science from our foremost experts.

In 2030, two commitments fall due: CITES’ strategic vision for a world where all international trade in wild fauna and flora is legal, sustainable and traceable...and the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals. Science must guide our actions if we are to meet those targets and IPBES is one of our leading lights.”

- **Ivonne Higuero**, Secretary-General, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

“Today one million species are at risk of extinction. And the unsustainable, illegal and unregulated use of species is a large part of the problem. For example, the illegal wildlife trade is a 23-billion-dollar annual business that lines the deep pockets of a few unscrupulous individuals. These people get rich at the expense of nature and ecosystems.

This trade also robs countries, indigenous people and local communities of access to their own resources and safe livelihoods. This is because an important value of nature lies in its sustainable use for food, medicine, income generation and livelihoods for millions of people.

It is critical to ensure sustainable use, and fair and equitable sharing of its benefits – particularly to the most vulnerable populations and the communities that are the stewards of nature. Sustainable use can provide a strong incentive for conservation and living in harmony with nature.

The Sustainable Use of Wild Species Assessment from IPBES, whose secretariat is hosted by UNEP, is a vital contribution to global efforts to ensure this happens.”

- **Inger Andersen**, Executive Director, UN Environment Programme (UNEP)

“The IPBES Assessment Report on the Sustainable Use of Wild Species is a stark reminder that human beings are interdependent with all living beings. Millions of people are living in harmony with nature in UNESCO designated sites worldwide, from Biosphere reserves to World heritage sites. This is a wealth of experience and solutions to reconcile and make peace with nature. It is not too late to act, and UNESCO is fully committed to mobilize the full force of education, science and culture to lead this global transformative change.”

- **Audrey Azoulay**, Director-General, UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)



“The sustainable use of wild species is important to the world’s agrifood systems. It is fundamental to the forestry and fisheries sectors, and it contributes directly to livelihoods, food security and nutrition, particularly in developing regions and indigenous people. Wild species provide a huge range of products, diversify diets, provide multiplies options for income generation, and are part of the cultural and social life of many communities.

We must ensure that the use of wild species is sustainable. Failure to do so will compromise the future of agrifood systems and jeopardize efforts to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. It will also undermine the supply of essential ecosystem services, increase the risk of infectious disease outbreaks, drive inequity and conflict, and diminish our capacity to mitigate and adapt to threats of the climate crisis.

This report heightens our understanding of how wild species are used and how they can be sustainably managed to benefit the people and habitats that depend on them.”

- **QU Dongyu**, Director-General, The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

“IPBES continues to strengthen the role of science in public decision-making on biodiversity and ecosystem services, ultimately helping to restore the delicate balance between people and our natural world. As part of these efforts, this new IPBES Assessment Report on the Sustainable Use of Wild Species, shows how billions of people depend on approximately 50,000 wild species for food, medicine, energy, and livelihoods. Crucially, it provides policymakers with a framework for sustainable management, one that includes data and analytics to track and trace wild species. Leveraging insights from 420 of the world’s leading experts in this field, the assessment’s latest science, evidence and analysis will help countries to implement the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. It also aims to contribute to a chain reaction of bold action on protecting, restoring, and sustainably managing nature towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Doing so will help the world to break through to a greener, more inclusive, and more sustainable future for all.”

- **Achim Steiner**, Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

“The IPBES Assessment on the Sustainable Use of Wild Species is an important tool and source of knowledge for all members of the biodiversity community. In our world faced with biodiversity decline, including as a result of the overexploitation of wild species, we need to better understand the ways forward for sustainable use. The need to better ensure the sustainable harvesting, trade and use of wild species while ensuring benefits to nutrition, food security, medicines, and livelihoods for people especially for the most vulnerable from the sustainable use of wild species has been well recognized in the discussions around the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

In examining the feasibility of and options for the sustainable use of wildlife on land, in freshwater and in the oceans, by people around the world, this report is in fact linked to the draft version of the Global Biodiversity Framework. We expect that this assessment can also be one of the tools to assist implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework, expected to begin after its adoption at COP 15.

Let me congratulate IPBES and its community of experts for this work. I look forward to its active use by all Parties and stakeholders to the Convention.”

- **Elizabeth Maruma Mrema**, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)