

# Wildlife in crisis: The urgent call to action

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“After some thinking, Kingfisher reckons that only by uniting the power of the entire village could they chase Snake away. Or at least they could threaten it somehow to lessen the disturbance?!”

—In “Virtue of Sacrifice”; *Wild Wise Weird* ([2024](#))

## [SCIENCE NEWS]

Imagine a world where three out of every four wild animals have disappeared. This isn't science fiction – it's our reality. The World Wildlife Fund's (WWF) Living Planet Report 2024 reveals a shocking truth: in just 50 years, wildlife populations worldwide have dropped by 73% on average. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the situation is even worse, with up to 95% of wildlife lost [1].

Vietnam, known as one of the world's most biologically diverse countries [2], is also contending with rapid biodiversity loss. As someone who has studied ecology in Vietnam, I have seen this firsthand. In just a few days, during a biodiversity training course in Kon Ka Kinh National Park, my friends and I collected a kilogram of illegal animal traps within the protected area. That's when it hit me – the threat to wildlife is not just numbers in a report.



**Illustration.** Generated by AI Copilot

The WWF report identifies several drivers of this decline: habitat degradation and loss, overexploitation, invasive species and disease, and climate change and pollution. Agricultural expansion into wild ecosystems is particularly devastating, and climate change further compounds these pressures, pushing many ecosystems towards potentially irreversible tipping points. Despite these alarming trends, there is still hope. Kirsten Schuijt, Director General of the World Wildlife Fund International, reminds us [1]:

“Fortunately, while time is running out, we are not yet past the point of no return. The power –and opportunity–are in our hands to change the trajectory.”

To deal with this environmental crisis, the [WWF Living Planet Report 2024](#) outlines several potential solutions, including nature conservation, food system transformation, energy system transformation, and green finance. The concept of green finance, which focuses on directing investments toward sustainable projects that benefit both the environment and development, can be strengthened by fostering an eco-surplus culture within society.

The eco-surplus culture, as detailed in the book “[Better Economics for the Earth](#)” by Vuong and Nguyen [3], is an integrated approach to environmental conservation. It is defined as a set of pro-environmental attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors shared across society to reduce negative anthropogenic impacts on the environment and actively conserve and

restore nature.

At its core, the concept emphasizes the critical role of information flow, awareness, and value formation in driving behavioral change [4]. When people become aware of environmental crises and their potential consequences, they are more likely to seek out and integrate information that helps them understand and address these challenges. This increased awareness creates a positive feedback loop, where informed individuals are more likely to engage in pro-environmental behaviors and influence others to do the same.

This concept goes beyond individual actions, influencing how governments create policies, how businesses operate, and how societies function. The eco-surplus culture encourages all societal actors to contribute their resources – be it time, money, skills, or influence – to generate environmental values, including those induced through conservation efforts. Such ecological values can be accounted for as monetary values, but NOT vice versa.

For governments, this might mean prioritizing environmental protection in policy-making and budget allocations. Businesses could integrate sustainability into their core strategies for growth. Individuals and communities are empowered to make eco-friendly choices in their daily lives and actively participate in local conservation initiatives.

In my experience working in Vietnam's diverse ecosystems, I have seen the need for building such an eco-surplus culture. Driven by this culture, large-scale investments can be directed to fund major conservation projects, while the day-to-day involvement of local communities can contribute to long-term sustainability.

## References

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[2] WWF. (2021). Assessing the biodiversity in Viet Nam: Analysis of impacts from economic sectors. WWF, Viet Nam. [https://www.biodev2030.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Final-Report\\_Biodiversity-assessment-in-Vietnam-Analysis-of-impact-of-economic-sectors-ENG.pdf](https://www.biodev2030.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Final-Report_Biodiversity-assessment-in-Vietnam-Analysis-of-impact-of-economic-sectors-ENG.pdf)

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[4] Vuong QH, Nguyen MH. (2024). Further on informational quanta, interactions, and entropy under the granular view of value formation. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4922461>

[5] Vuong QH. (2024). *Wild Wise Weird*. <https://www.amazon.com/dp/BOBG2NNHY6>



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