

# Ending the Default Killing of All Mammals and Terrestrial Vertebrates

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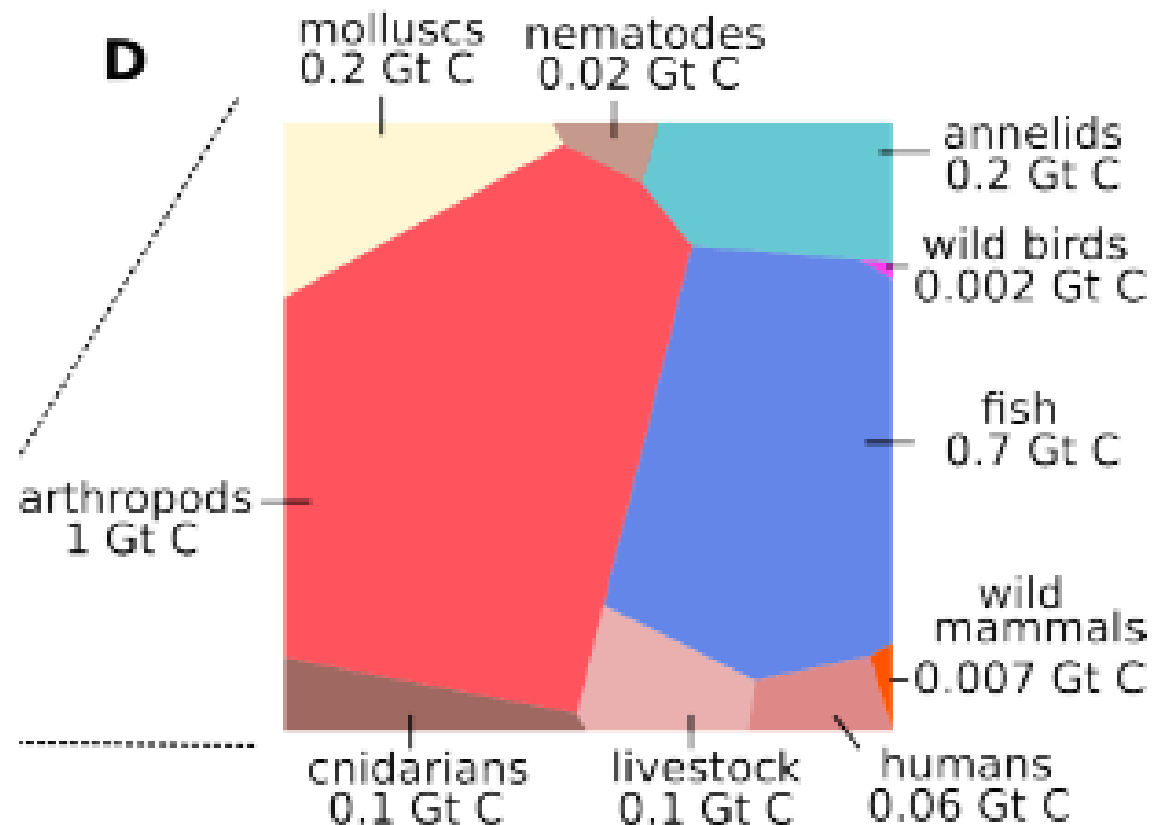
***Presentation given on March 21, 2019 at the Conservation Geopolitics Forum organized by Oxford University's WildCRU, Worcester College, Oxford.***

# OUTLINE

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- **The Present Challenge – Disappearing Wildlife & Wild Land**
- **Humans have always hunted/consumed wildlife. New conservation ethics at turn of 20<sup>th</sup> Century – Muir versus Pinchot**
- **Types of Terrestrial Wildlife Killing**
- **Changing Ethics & Practical Conditions (humans dominate)**
  - **Compassionate Conservation**
  - **Preservation (return to Muir's arguments)**
- **Issues – aboriginal hunting, trophy hunting, protecting land for wild animals & justice factors, luxury goods from wildlife**
- **Campaign to End Routine Wildlife Killing**

# Disappearing Wildlife - Mammals



## Gt Carbon

- **Humans** – 0.06 (35.9%)
- **Domestic Mammals** – 0.1 (59.9%)
- **Wild mammals** – 0.007 (4.2%)
- **Fish** – 0.7
- **Wild Birds** – 0.002

Bar-On YM et al,  
[pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.1711842115](https://pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.1711842115)

# Disappearing Wildlife - Insects

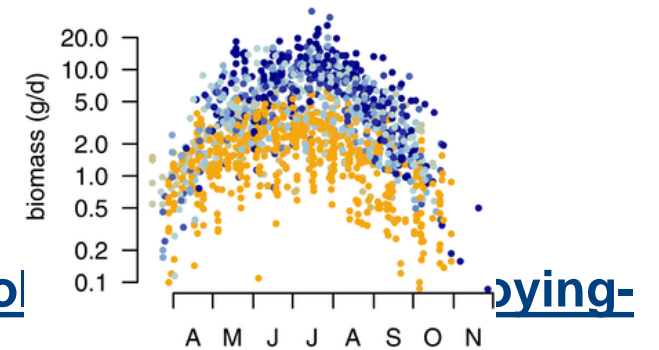
- Hallmann CA et al. (2017) More than 75 percent decline over 27 years in total flying insect biomass in protected areas. PLoS ONE 12(10): e0185809.

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0185809>

- <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/jan/15/insect-collapse-our-life-support-systems>

**Puerto Rico – 98% decline of ground insects, 80% decline of canopy insects in 35 years**

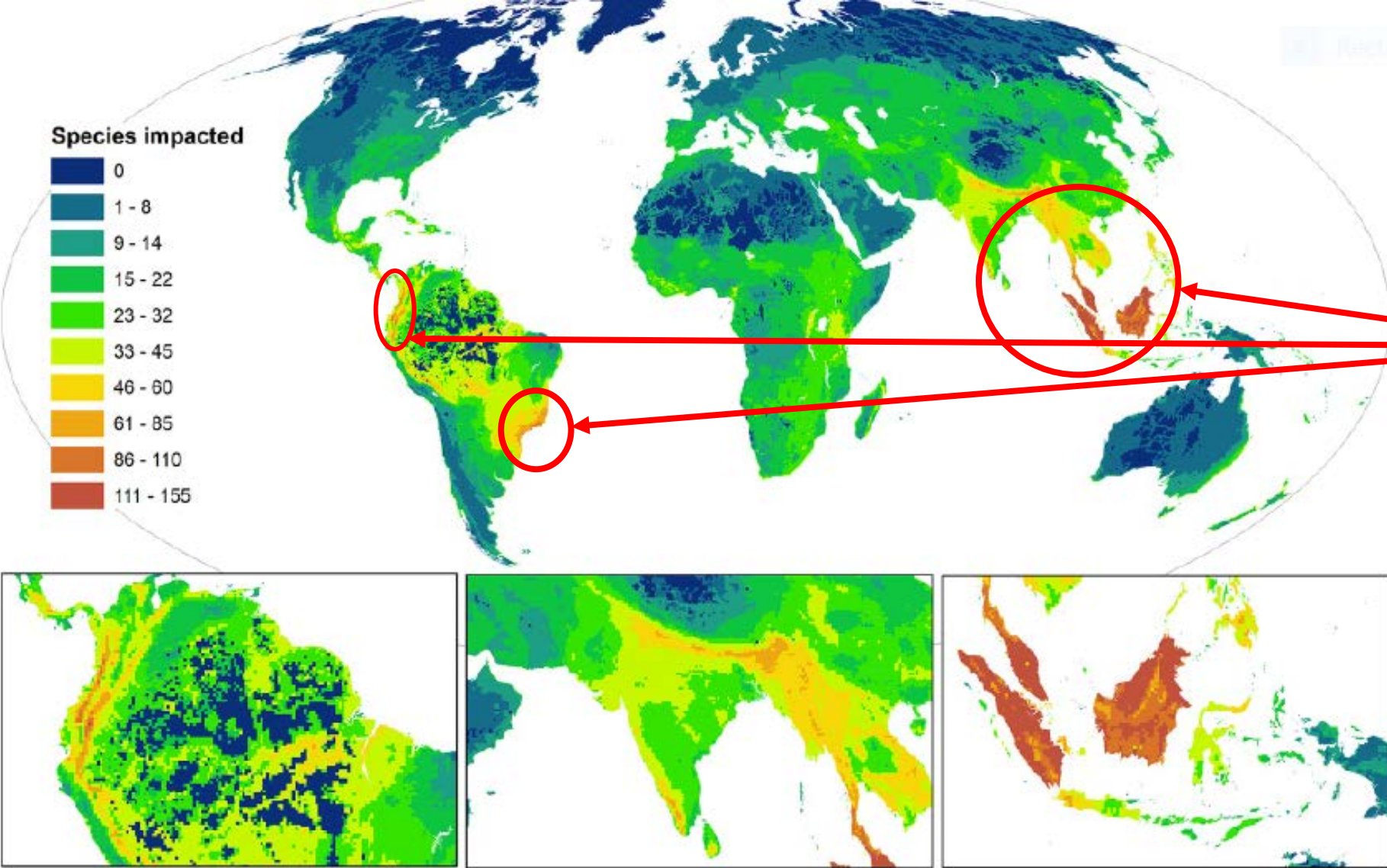
**Virtual disappearance of birds in Australian eucalyptus forest blamed on collapse of insect population.**



# Wildlife Ethics & Protection

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- Muir – Preserve FROM Human Use
- Pinchot – Preserve FOR Human Use
- Aldo Leopold – attempted to resolve this conflict – “Respect” for nature
- Today – “Use it or lose it” or the more palatable “sustainable use;”  
but now the development of “Compassionate Conservation” &  
return to Preservation
- The ethics debate is challenging and interesting
- The urgency of the huge decline in wildlife numbers (terrestrial vertebrates, insects, marine species) is overwhelming “is-ought” questions.



**5,457 terrestrial vertebrates & 8 major threats – for 23% of species, threats cover 90+% of range. “Hot” spots circled.**

**Fig 3. Cumulative human impacts on threatened and near-threatened terrestrial vertebrates ( $n = 5,457$ ).** Legend indicates the number of species in a grid cell impacted by at least one threat. Maps use a 30 km  $\times$  30 km grid and a Mollweide equal area projection. The data underlying this figure are freely available [31] (doi:10.1594/PANGAEA.897391).

# The New Wildlife Ethics

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- **Born Free, WildCRU 2010 – Compassionate Conservation**
- **Vucetich et al 2018 – Just Conservation** (Biol Conserv 221:23-33)
- **Treves et al 2019 – Just Preservation** (Biol Conserv 229:134-141)
- **Continue to explore/expand ethical issues (including justice issues for human communities neighboring protected lands) but the threats are so widespread and so pressing that we need to launch **NOW a political campaign** to protect land (e.g. the Lion Estate promoted by WildCRU) and to lessen the threats to wildlife.**

# A Possible Campaign

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- **End “Default” Killing of Wildlife** – especially for sport hunting and in human-wildlife conflict resolution.
- **Campaign should have a simple, readily comprehended goal/rallying cry** (a la the Cage-Free Campaign)
- “Cage-free” was simple and readily grasped by public even if not scientifically optimal to support laying hen welfare
- **End the default killing/consumption of wildlife** – to attract support and generate political change.
- Do not have much time left with decline in wildlife and growing pressure on remaining wild spaces (return to Fortress conservn)



# Types of Consumptive Use of Wildlife

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- **Consumptive Killing**
  - **Market Hunting** (e.g. bushmeat for self, bushmeat for sale)
  - **Sport Hunting** (pleasure & trophies, killing contests)
  - **Commodity Markets** – eg Kangaroo leather, whaling, sealing
  - **Luxury Good Markets** – eg ivory, rhino horn, skins
- **Nuisance killing** (human-wildlife conflict – eg wolves, coyotes, starlings, Canada geese, suburban deer, bears, rodents)
- **Conservation killing** (e.g. New Zealand proposal to eradicate invasives, Feral cat eradication proposals, killing cormorants in Portland to save salmon fishery, killing invasive species on islands)

# **SAMPLE ISSUES – Hunting & Land Protection**

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- **Consumptive users (hunting interests) helped drive political & economic support for & implementation of protection of large areas**
- **But “Acceptance of killing wildlife” may have longer-term negative consequences in a world with 10 billion people.**
- **Hunting concessions produce relatively small economic returns on the use of land (photo-tourism 10-fold more productive) but can hunt in land unsuitable for photo-tourism**
- **Hunting concessions protect territory for wild animals – eg Namibia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Tanzania**
- **Wild animals thrive where humans are not present, even under difficult circumstances (e.g. Korean DMZ, Chernobyl exclusion zone)**

# **SAMPLE ISSUES – Hunting & Land Protection**

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- **Bubye Valley Conservancy (3,700 sqkm) as positive example of what can be achieved with hunting concession – but more the exception than the rule (corruption and bad faith more common)**
- **Issues of justice for human neighbors (for both hunting conservancies & protected areas)**
- **Models for land protection**
  - **Private – hunting & ecotourism**
  - **State – mostly ecotourism**
  - **State with private assistance (eg African Parks Foundation – 100,000 sqkm under management)**
  - **Vital need for “corridors” to connect and increase usable wildlife space**
- **Justice questions – excluding local peoples from land that they have traditionally used for survival**

# SAMPLE ISSUES – Human-Wildlife Conflict

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- **“Wild Neighbors” Conflict Resolution**
  - Contraception rather than culling – horses (US, Australia, Hungary), elephants (Africa & Asia), bears
  - Baboons & other primates – monitoring & deterring
  - Feral cats – working with advocates to reduce impacts rather than fighting advocates in fruitless and expensive political arguments
  - Rodent pests – Gene drive technologies?
  - Government sponsored killing – APHIS Wildlife Services in USA kills several million animals annually for questionable (zero) benefit
  - Gull (Massachusetts to help endangered terns) & Cormorant (Oregon to help salmon fisheries) harassment & killing
- **Will require significant shift in attitudes and new approaches but enhanced by new technological fixes?**

# SAMPLE ISSUES – Commodities & Luxury Products

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- Mongolian grassland erosion – Cashmere from luxury product to one with mass appeal – threatening livelihoods, grasslands and wildlife in Mongolia.
- Kangaroo Meat & Leather – Sustaining arguments that killing wildlife is acceptable
- Seal hunts (Canada, Namibia, Azerbaijan) – Sustaining arguments that killing wildlife is acceptable
- Bushmeat – wildlife vanishing in West Africa (people turning to dog meat for alternative to bushmeat), community conservancies in Namibia killing their wildlife in face of long-term drought
- Ivory and Rhino Horn
  - Luxury product economics are different from commodities: with rising disposable income, demand keeps rising. Most powdered rhino horn not from rhinos? Management of trade in ivory & rhino horn questionably effective.

# CONCLUSION

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- **No simple answers** – arguments for and against
- But **campaign** needs to present a readily comprehended and **simple** rallying call
- Proposing a ban on all mammal and terrestrial vertebrate killing - change the debate and focus greater attention globally on vanishing wildlife (no privileged exceptions)
- End routine killing wildlife for sport, for commodities and for conflict resolution. More countries moving to a hunting ban (eg Costa Rica, Romania, Colombia, Botswana) and public mood shifting globally to support killing bans.