

# Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15) briefing



**November 2022**

## Background

- The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Conference of the Parties (COP) is a global conference to make commitments to halt and begin to reverse the loss of the world's biodiversity by 2030.
- The [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) was a treaty created at an Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 to tackle nature decline, and now decision makers meet every two years at a COP to tackle biodiversity loss, set global targets and monitor progress.
- The 15<sup>th</sup> meeting will be taking place in Montreal, Canada, from 7 to 19 December 2022. It had been set to take place in Kunming, China in October 2020, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, China will now be hosting and organising the event in coordination with the Canadian government.
- COP15 is the most important event for the nature agenda this decade and represents a unique opportunity for governments to agree an ambitious Post-2020 Framework to put the world on a course for addressing nature decline.

## What is the current state of biodiversity decline?

- The world is witnessing a rapid decline in global biodiversity, with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) estimating [one million animal and plant species at threat of extinction](#).
- Since 1970 a [68% decline in population sizes](#) of mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and fish has been recorded and [75% of land surface](#) has been significantly altered by human actions.
- [WWF's Living Planet Report 2022](#) finds an average 69% decline in wildlife between 1970 and 2018.
- Nature loss is putting economies at risk, with the [World Economic Forum](#) estimating over half of the world's total GDP, \$44 trillion, being moderately or highly dependent on nature and its services. A nature-based transition could create \$10 trillion in business opportunity and create 395 million jobs by 2030.

## What are the Aichi Targets?

- In Japan 2010, countries adopted the [Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020](#), which included the [Aichi Biodiversity Targets](#).
- The Plan lays out 20 targets covering a range of themes, including: reducing habitat loss, improving protected areas, preventing extinction, improving shared knowledge, and increasing financial resources.
- Ten years on, [by 2020, none of the Aichi Targets were met in full](#), resulting in a lost decade of meaningful action to reverse biodiversity loss.

## Why is COP15 an important moment for the UK and why should the Prime Minister attend?

- On 14 July 2022, cross party MPs gathered for a [Backbench Business Committee debate on COP15](#) and called for the Prime Minister to attend the conference.
- The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, with [15% of species threatened with extinction](#), and the UK missed 17 of the 20 Aichi targets agreed to in 2010.
- Through involvement in the [High Ambition Coalition](#), the government has championed global action on the 30x30 target to protect and conserve land and sea by 2030 and played a key role in signing up other governments to the target. The government also set up the [Global Ocean Alliance](#), bringing along 73 members to champion the 30x30 ocean target. Attending COP15 will signal the government's commitment to delivering ambitious outcomes for nature.
- Domestically, the UK should meet the Paris Agreement for nature with renewed commitment and determination to deliver on the ambition of the 25-year Environment Plan and leave the environment in a better state.
- The government recently missed the legal deadline to introduce its Environment Act 2021 targets, and research shows that [only 5% of land is currently effectively managed](#) despite the pledge to protect 30% of land and sea.
- The Prime Minister should attend COP15 and work with world leaders to create a "leaders' moment" in Montreal to ensure nature is afforded the same political attention as climate.

## What outcomes do global leaders need to secure?

- The key focus will be finalising the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and reaching agreement on the [22 drafted targets](#); only two have full sign-off currently. Negotiators will agree on numerical values for the targets, for example the 30x30 target to protect land and sea by 2030, reducing pesticide use by half and the rate of introduction of invasive species by half.
- A ratchet mechanism is needed similar to that enshrined in the Paris agreement, to encourage countries to strengthen their plans over time.
- The Framework should recognise the important role of indigenous peoples and local communities in protection biodiversity. Globally, their lands cover [one third of the Earth's land surface and 80% of biodiversity conservation areas](#), so it is essential that the global framework respects and strengthens land rights.
- The [Environmental Audit Committee](#) recommends that progress is made on target 16 to include a clear target to reduce countries' ecological footprint, particularly for food systems which are responsible for 80% of deforestation.
- Much greater progress needs to be made to raise funding for biodiversity protection. It is estimated that [\\$200 billion is needed by 2030](#), and current pledges of \$20 billion by 2025 fall short. A forum for finance will be organised at the conference, to provide businesses and governments an opportunity to negotiate funding.

## How does it relate to COP27?

- COP27 is the 27<sup>th</sup> UN Climate Change Conference, held from 6 and 18 November 2022 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. International leaders have regularly attended these climate conferences, but COP15 has had less attention, despite the dual climate and nature crisis.
- A key theme on the agenda for this COP is to consider how climate change and the loss of biodiversity are connected and that one cannot be solved without the other.

- To reduce emissions, we need to cut carbon dioxide. But nature can provide a solution to climate change, with saltmarsh, peatland and woodland storing vast amounts of carbon and providing habitats for species at the same time. Nature can also reduce the flood risk that comes with climate change.
- Like the annual UN climate change conferences, CBD COP15, will discuss accelerating action on both crises, with new targets to be set in the [Global Biodiversity Framework](#).

#### **What do voters think?**

- [Polling](#) from the National Trust, the RSPB and WWF finds 81% of UK adults believe nature is under threat and 64% have witnessed decline first hand in the last five years.
- [Polling](#) from Wildlife and Countryside Link finds 83% of UK adults want greater protection to ensure natural spaces are retained and 85%, and 80% say everyone should have a legal right to be able to access nature-rich spaces in their local area.