

15



Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Goal 15 Targets:

15.1) By 2020, **ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems** and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements.

15.2) By 2020, **promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally.**

15.3) By 2030, **combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil**, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and **strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world.**

15.4) By 2030, **ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems**, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development.

15.5) Take urgent and significant action to **reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity** and, by 2020, protect and **prevent the extinction of threatened species.**

15.6) **Promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources** and promote appropriate access to such resources, as internationally agreed.

15.7) Take urgent action **to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products.**

15.8) By 2020, introduce measures to **prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species** on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species.

15.9) By 2020, **integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts.**

15.a) Mobilize and **significantly increase financial resources** from all sources to conserve and **sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems.**

15.b) **Mobilize significant resources from all sources** and at all levels **to finance sustainable forest management and provide adequate incentives** to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation.

15.c) **Enhance global support** for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including **by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities.**

See page 6 for further resources on life on land and Goal 15.

Take action toward achieving goal 15

Take action locally:

- **Congregational actions:** *Engage members of your congregation in action either through volunteering, advocacy, exercises, or wider congregational changes.*
 - **Educate your congregation on the importance of protecting our freshwater ecosystems** using information from the [Department of Conservation](#) and [National Geographic](#).
 - Encourage your congregation to **use these tips on how to conserve water** from [National Geographic](#) and [The Nature Conservancy](#)
 - **Take a volunteer trip with your congregation to clean up your local wetland** (find wetlands near you in the [US](#) and [Canada](#)).
 - Urge your congregation to **use these tips on how to protect wetlands** from the [NOAA](#).
 - Set up an informational table or booth to teach your congregation about **the dangers of deforestation** using resources from the [WWF](#) (helpful infographics [here](#)) and [National Geographic](#).
 - **Plan a volunteer trip with your congregation to plant trees** (find organizations near you in the [US](#) and [Canada](#).)
 - **Encourage your congregation to volunteer for public forests** in the [US](#) and [Canada](#).
 - **Celebrate [National Public Lands Day](#)** by planning an event or [finding one near you](#).
 - Teach your congregation about **the importance of protecting endangered species and maintaining biodiversity** using resources from [Endangered Species International](#) and the [U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service](#) (PDF).
 - Use these **tips on what you can do to save endangered species** from the [Endangered Species Coalition](#).
 - **Symbolically adopt an animal** [from the WWF](#) to support their global efforts to protect wild animals and their habitats.
 - **Take the pledge** to help the [WWF stop wildlife crime](#).
 - **Use the map on [racingextinction.com](#)** to find endangered species near you and learn how the Racing Extinction team is working to protect species across the globe.
 - **Sign up for the [Racing Extinction Challenge](#)** to join thousands of people making easy personal choices every day which, when added up, will help protect species around the Earth.
 - **Support biodiversity by buying products that do not harm the environment.** Check out the [Earth Institute at Columbia University's](#) list of the most reliable and respected ecolabels to look out for when buying fresh produce and other products.
 - **Buy organic foods** to avoid supporting GMO corporations like Monsanto (learn more about them from [Vice News](#) and [Global Research](#)).
 - Work with your congregation to **prevent the introduction and spread of invasive plants** using tips from the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#).
 - **Teach your congregation about the importance of protecting mountain ecosystems** using resources from the [WWF](#) and the [Food and Agriculture Organization](#).
 - **Check out these tips** from [UIAA Protect the Mountains](#) on how you can help preserve our mountains.

- **Petitions:** *Sign the following petitions advocating for protection of life on land in the U.S. and Canada. Collect signatures at your congregation by book a table during coffee hour.*
 - [Urge the United States government](#) to pass the Refuge from Cruel Trapping Act.
 - [Show your support for the WWF's](#) effort to save monarch butterflies.
 - [Ask your member of Congress](#) to co-sponsor the Recovering America's Wildlife Act.
 - [Stop the US Fish and Wildlife Service](#) from delisting the Florida panther as an endangered species.
 - [Tell Prime Minister Justin Trudeau](#) to protect Canada's lakes and rivers.
 - [Urge the U.S. Government](#) to stop the sale of public land.
 - [Tell Cindy Crane, CEO of Rocky Mountain Power](#), to work with the EPA to protect the health, communities and national parks of Utah from coal pollution.
 - [Call on Lawrence MacAulay, Canadian Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food](#), to stop the transfer of federally managed grasslands in Saskatchewan until a nature plan is in place.
 - [Urge Gina McCarthy, EPA Administrator](#), to stop the sale of pesticides suspected of harming endangered species.

- **Films for Screening**
 - [The National Parks: America's Best Idea](#) – a PBS series on the history of the U.S. National Parks system, including the initial ideas which led to the world's first national parks and the expansion of the system over 150 years.
 - [Mountains in Motion: The Canadian Rockies](#) – an experimental short documenting the life of Canada's alpine landscape through time-lapse photography.
 - [Trees in Trouble](#) – a documentary which tells the story of America's urban and community forests: their history, their growing importance to our health, economy and environment, and the serious threats they now face.
 - [America's Grasslands: A Threatened National Treasure](#) – a short film on American grasslands, and the dangers they currently face.
 - [The Future of Food](#) – a documentary which investigates the unlabeled, parented, genetically engineered foods sold in grocery stores in the United States and Canada for the past decade.
 - [EXPOSED: USDA's Secret War on Wildlife](#) -- a documentary featuring three former federal agents and a prominent Congressman revealing the wasteful "Wildlife Services" program within the USDA.
 - [Wild Canada](#) – a CBC series about Canada's wildlife.
 - [GMO OMG](#) – a film about one father's search to learn about the effects GMOs have on children, the planet, and our freedom of choice.

- **Book club reads:**
 - [Where There Are Mountains: An Environmental History of the Southern Appalachians](#) – Donald Edward Davis, on the relationship between human inhabitants of the southern Appalachians and their environment.
 - [Canada's Forests: A History](#) – Ken Drushka, on the constantly shifting human attitudes towards the forests of Canada.
 - [The Forest Unseen: A Year's Watch in Nature](#) -- David George Haskell, a botanist reveals the secret world hidden in a one-square-meter patch of Tennessee forest, which he observed every day for a year.
 - [The Wild Trees](#) – Richard Preston, a story of a tiny group of daring botanists who all share the common goal of protecting the redwood trees on the coast of Northern California.
 - [The Endangered Species Road Trip: A Summer's Worth of Dingy Motels, Poison Oak, Ravenous Insects, and the Rarest Species in North America](#) – Cameron MacDonald, on his road trip to observe North America's rarest species from British Columbia, along the west

coast of the U.S., through the Southwest and Florida, through the southwest and Florida, up the east coast of the US, and finally to eastern Canada. In addition to documenting the road trip of a lifetime, MacDonald offers fascinating details about the natural history of the endangered species he seeks, as well as threats like overpopulation, commercial fishing, and climate change that are driving them towards extinction.

- **[Growing Resistance: Canadian Farmers and the Politics of Genetically Modified Wheat](#)** – Emily Eaton, on the historical and political significance of wheat in the Canadian provinces, and how that led to Canadian farmer’s strong opposition to genetically modified wheat.

- **NGOs working toward the cause**

- **[National Fish and Wildlife Foundation](#)**: a nonprofit organization devoted to the protection of freshwater ecosystems in the United States.
- **[Nature Conservancy Canada](#)**: the leading national land conservation in Canada, which partners with individuals, corporations and other non-profit organizations to protect the natural areas that sustain Canada’s plants and wildlife.
- **[National Audubon Society](#)**: a non-profit environmental organization dedicated to conservation of birds, other wildlife and healthy ecosystems.
- **[Nature Canada](#)**: a Canadian environmental organization, whose mission is to “protect and conserve wildlife and habitats in Canada by engaging people and advocating on the behalf of nature.
- **[Defenders of Wildlife](#)**: an organization devoted to protecting all animals and plants native to North America by developing programs that protect and restore key species and habitats, working with policy makers on laws that protect animals and their habitats, and fighting efforts to roll back environmental protections.
- **[National Wildlife Refuge Association](#)**: an independent non-profit organization that works to conserve American wildlife by strengthening and expanding the 150-million-acre National Wildlife System.
- **[Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society](#)**: an organization whose vision is to keep at least half of Canada’s public land and water wild forever.
- **[American Forests](#)**: a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to protecting and restoring healthy forest ecosystems. Their Global ReLeaf program plants millions of trees each year in large-scale forest restoration projects.

Take action internationally:

- **Petitions**: *Sign the following petitions advocating to protect life on land across the globe. Collect signatures at your congregation by booking a table during coffee hour.*
 - **[Tell Sir Ousmane Kone, the Environment Minister of Mali](#)**, to take action to save the last 300 elephants of Mali.
 - **[Urge the Tirgu-Mures Zoo in Romania](#)** to send Tania, an isolated elephant, to a sanctuary.
 - **[Stand with the Tanzanian government](#)** to help stop the illegal ivory trade.
 - **[Tell Cadbury](#)** to make the shift to a safe, certified style of palm oil to combat deforestation.
 - **[Demand that Edna Molewa, South African Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs](#)**, create a more comprehensive action plan to save rhinos.
 - **[Urge the Australian Government](#)** to save Australia’s brumbies.
 - **[Call on Christian Schmidt, Germany’s Agricultural Minister](#)**, to stop the renewal of Monsanto’s use of Glyphosate.
- **Films for screening**: *Host a film screening and discussion of any of the following documentaries on land conservation and sustainability.*

- [**Racing Extinction**](#) – a documentary about the ongoing Anthropogenic mass extinction of species and the efforts from scientists, activists and journalists to document it. You can also use their [interactive website](#) to learn more.
 - [**The World According to Monsanto**](#) – a film about Marie-Monique Robin’s three-year-long investigation into the corporate practices around the world of the United States multinational GMO Corporation, Monsanto. There is also a [book version](#) available.
 - [**Virunga**](#) – a documentary chronicling the many challenges facing the conservation of Africa’s oldest National Park, which is one of the world’s last remaining biodiversity hotspots. The film focuses on how conservation is connected to ending armed conflict, which you can read more about from the [IUCN](#).
 - [**Last Days of Ivory**](#) – a very short but impactful examining how violence against elephants is tied to global terrorism and other crimes.
 - [**The Man Who Stopped the Desert**](#) – the true story of Yacouba Sawadogo, a man who single-handedly managed to develop re-forestation and soil conservation techniques so effective that they’ve helped turn the tide in the fight against the desertification of the harsh lands in northern Burkina Faso.
 - [**The Last Rhino**](#) – a documentary focused on the global practice of poaching and killing rhinos for their horns. A [book version](#) is also available.
- **Book club reads:** *Consider forming a book club with a few members of your congregation to read and discuss any of the following books on the conservation and sustainability of life on land.*
 - [**Towards Forest Sustainability**](#) – David B. Lindenmayer and Jerry F. Franklin, a compilation of practical essays by some of the world’s leading forest ecologists and managers from the US, Canada, Finland, Sweden, Australia and New Zealand.
 - [**Genetically Modified Food**](#) – Rebecca Rissman, on the history of GMOs, the science behind them, why and how we utilize them, and the controversies surrounding them from an objective viewpoint.
 - [**Seeds of Hope: Wisdom and Wonder from the World of Plants**](#) – Jane Goodall, on the critical role that trees and plants play in our world.
 - [**People Managing Forests: The Links Between Human Well-Being and Sustainability**](#) – Carol J. Pierce Colfer and Yvonne Byron apply a diverse range of social science methods to focus on the interests of the stakeholders living in the most intimate proximity to managed forests, exploring how increasing sustainability better access to resources, gender relations and equality in both forest-rich and forest-poor countries.
 - [**As in the Heart, So in the Earth: Reversing the Desertification of the Soul and the Soil**](#) – Pierre Rabhi, the world’s leading expert on soil desertification, shows how ecology can only flourish when spiritual elements are present.
 - [**The Fate of the Forest: Developers, Destroyers and Defenders of the Amazon**](#) – Susanna Hecht, Alexander Cockburn, on the history and current destruction crisis of the Amazon forest which explores the role of human hands in destroying and saving the vast forest region.
- **NGOs working toward the cause:** *Hold a fundraiser or collection plate for any of the following NGOs working to protect life on land.*
 - [**Better Globe**](#): an organization which consults local populations and plants trees where neither forestry nor agriculture has existed previously to combat poverty, desertification and water shortage.
 - [**The Great Green Wall Initiative**](#): a pan-African group which is part of the Global Environment Facility working to combat poverty and the degradation of soils in the Sahel-Saharan region, focusing on a strip of land from Dakar to Djibouti.

- [World Wildlife Fund](#): the leading global nonprofit organization in wildlife conservation and endangered species.
- [Fauna and Flora International](#): one of the world's first conservation societies, which work to maintain biodiversity, conserves threatened species and ecosystems worldwide. They strive to choose solutions that are sustainable, based on sound science, and take into account human needs.
- [Biodiversity International](#): a global research-for development organization with the vision that agricultural biodiversity nourishes people and sustains the planet.
- [Greenpeace](#): an NGO with offices in over 40 countries, which focuses its campaigning on worldwide issues such as climate change, deforestation, overfishing, commercial whaling, genetic engineering and anti-nuclear advocacy.
- [Earthwatch Institute](#): an international non-profit organization, which is one of the largest global underwriters of scientific field research in archaeology, paleontology, marine life, biodiversity, ecosystems and wildlife.

Further resources on goal 14 and ocean sustainability:

- [Goal 15 targets and related publications](#) on land sustainability.
- [UN facts and figures](#) on Goal 15 and the conservation of global biodiversity.
- [Global Goals images](#) relating to Goal 15: Pass these around at your congregation to raise awareness of the fourteenth goal!
- [UN Development Program's \(UNDP\) role in achieving goal 15](#), and recent work related to protecting life on land across the world.
- [UNCCD](#)'s report on desertification.
- [World Wildlife Fund](#)'s list of all endangered species.
- More information from the [WWF](#) on the illegal wildlife trade.
- Additional infographics on deforestation can be found from [the WWF](#), [Inhabitat](#) and the [NOAA](#).