

## STEPS TO SAVE THE PLANET

This Earth Day, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) offers some simple suggestions on how everyone can do their part to help protect our planet.

**Protect Endangered Species. Say "No" to Illegal Souvenirs.** As you vacation in certain parts of the world, remember that some souvenirs could end up costing a lot more than you paid for them. Think twice before you buy any products made from any endangered species including animal hides and other body parts, tortoise-shell, ivory, or coral - they could be illegal. Supporting this damaging trade doesn't just add to the pressure on endangered species, you could also risk having your goods seized when you get home.

**Protect Our Forests.** Forests stand as great storehouses of natural life, but nearly two-thirds of the world's original forests are gone. Forests fall to the chainsaw at an accelerating pace, driven by an international timber trade that respects neither national boundaries nor ecological limits. To help save our forests:

- \* Use recycled wood for small remodeling and repair projects.
- \* Purchase wood products certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).
- \* Ask your home builder, remodeler, or architect to use FSC-certified products.
- \* Buy recycled paper products and promote convenient and practical paper recycling.
- \* Avoid the use of chlorine-bleached paper.

**Protect Our Oceans.** Get the facts and learn if something is "fishy." The crisis in the world's oceans is staggering -- 70 percent of the most valuable marine fisheries are either over-fished or fished to the limit. Marine ecosystems are under further stress from destructive practices, such as cyanide and dynamite-fishing, and from "bycatch" of non-target species that claims as much as 29 million tons of fish, seabirds, turtles, and marine mammals every year.

- \* Be an informed consumer of fish and other seafood. Ask where the fish you are purchasing comes from and the status of the fishery.
- \* Do not purchase Chilean sea bass. Both Patagonia and Antarctic tooth fish are marketed as sea bass. Illegal fishing will result in commercial extinction of these fish in the Southern Ocean within two or three years.
- \* Avoid purchasing over-exploited stocks such as Atlantic swordfish, wild-caught Atlantic salmon, and sharks. These fish take a long time to reach breeding age, so their stocks have been depleted quite rapidly. By not buying them, you can give their numbers a chance to recover in the wild.
- \* Avoid products from fisheries with excessive levels of bycatch. Animals like shrimp (wild and farm raised), scallops (wild) and oysters (wild) tend to have large amounts of bycatch associated with them, so they should be avoided if possible.

**Reduce Your Impact on Global Warming.** As pollution increases, so does the world's average temperature. Global warming forces rapid changes in human and animal habitats. To help turn down the heat on the planet:

- \* Replace standard light bulbs with energy-efficient fluorescents.
- \* Choose the best energy-saving models when you replace windows.
- \* Install low-flow showerheads that use less water.
- \* Whenever possible, walk, bike, carpool or use mass transit.
- \* Insulate walls and ceilings and save about 25% of home heating bills.

**Reduce Your Use of Toxic Chemicals.** Toxic chemicals can now be found in trace amounts in virtually all creatures and in all environments. Once in the environment, toxic chemicals can travel great distances, persist for many years, and grow more concentrated in living things as they move through the food web. Make informed consumer decisions:

- \* Buy organically grown (pesticide free) fruits and vegetables, cotton clothing and other goods.
- \* Stop using pesticides. Green up your yard using natural products.
- \* Buy household chemicals that are the least hazardous, and don't buy or use chlorine bleach.
- \* Look for the words "biodegradable" or "non-toxic" on the label.
- \* Avoid products containing EDTA, NTA, phosphates, chlorine bleach or sodium hypochlorite.

Take Action! Contact your government officials and business leaders and urge them to support clean energy policies and environmentally sound practices for important issues such as endangered species, global warming and forest protection. Visit World Wildlife Fund's Conservation Action Network to get active on behalf of our environment we all share.

Collect Pennies. Schools can get involved by collecting pennies to support conservation projects.

Written by: World Wildlife Fund