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# TOTAL WIPEOUT Earth could lose a THIRD of all animal and plant species in our lifetimes, scientists warn

Published: 10:16, 13 Feb 2020



**MILLIONS of Earth's creatures are at risk of extinction by 2070 due to climate change, scientists have warned.**

A study found that a third of animal and plant species could be wiped from existence as temperatures soar across the globe.

# WILDLIFE CRISIS

Here are some key facts from a UN report on the mass extinction of Earth's wildlife



## 8 MILLION

Total number of animal and plant species on Earth

## 1 MILLION

Species threatened with extinction, many within decades



## 680

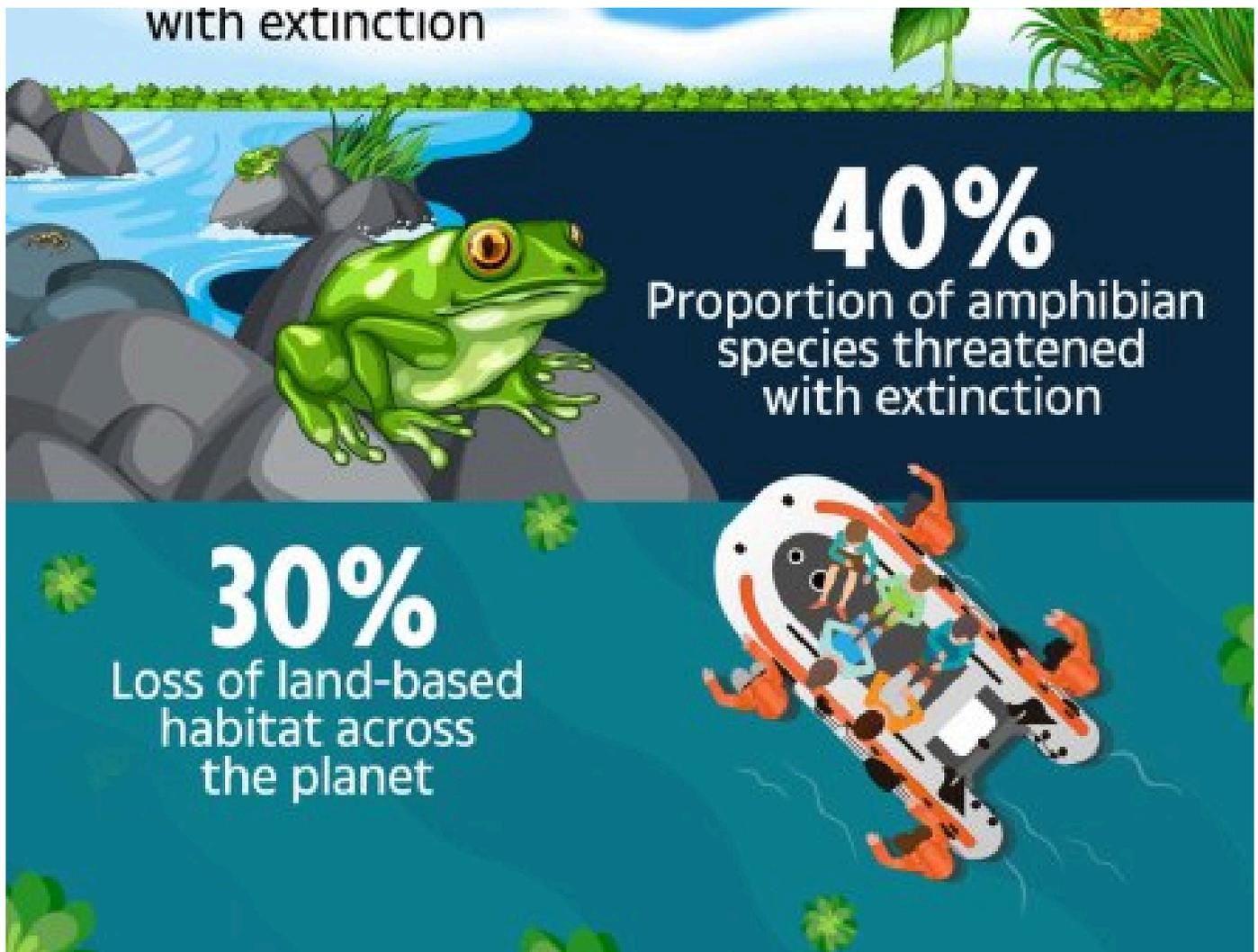
Species driven to extinction by human actions since the 16th century



## 10%

Proportion of insect species threatened





The above stats are based on a previous UN report on Earth's wildlife

Researchers at the University of Arizona examined 538 species at 581 sites worldwide.

They focussed on creatures and plants found at the same sites over a ten-year period or more.

More than four in ten of the species studied have already gone extinct at one or more sites.

After combining this data with predictions of Earth's future climate, scientists made a grim discovery.



**The common giant tree frog from Madagascar is one of many species impacted by recent climate change, researchers found**

Based on current projections, as many as one in three of Earth's eight million plant and animal species could be gone within the next 50 years.

Species were more likely to go extinct at locations that regularly hit their maximum annual temperatures – the hottest daily highs in summer.

As global temperatures rise due to climate change, many of the planet's key habitats are expected reach these maximums more frequently.

It's down to humanity to tackle global warming if Earth's ecosystems are to be saved, researchers said.

The first step would be for nations to stick to the Paris climate deal, which in 2015 saw 195 countries set goals to keep global warming under 1C from current levels.

"In a way, it's a 'choose your own adventure,'" said University of Arizona scientist Professor John J. Wiens.

## Climate change explained

### Here are the basic facts...

- Scientists have lots of evidence to show that the Earth's climate is rapidly changing due to human activity
- Climate change will result in problems like global warming, greater risk of flooding, droughts and regular heatwaves

- Each of the last three decades have been hotter than the previous one and 17 of the 18 warmest years on record have happened during the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- The Earth only needs to increase by a few degrees for it to spell disaster
- The oceans are already warming, polar ice and glaciers are melting, sea levels are rising and we're seeing more extreme weather events
- In 2015, almost all of the world's nations signed a deal called the Paris Agreement which set out ways in which they could tackle climate change and try to keep temperatures below 2C

"If we stick to the Paris Agreement to combat climate change, we may lose fewer than two out of every 10 plant and animal species on Earth by 2070.

"But if humans cause larger temperature increases, we could lose more than a third or even half of all animal and plant species, based on our results."

The study was published in the journal [Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences](#).

Last year, a similar study from the UN reported that one million of the planet's eight million species were threatened with extinction.

Up to 680 vertebrate species – that's any animal with a spine – have been driven to extinction by humans since the 16th century, researchers warned.

To make things worse, figures showed that rates of species extinction were speeding up.

It led to warnings that humanity was driving the sixth mass extinction event in Earth's history.



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In other news, scientists recently warned that a mass extinction that will destroy human civilisation will begin in 2100.

The Great Dying, which killed almost all of Earth's ocean creatures around 250 million years ago, was caused by global warming similar to the heating affecting our planet today.

And, here are three possible ways human civilisation could end as revealed by mathematicians.

Are you worried about mass extinctions over the next century? Let us know in the comments!

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