



## State of the Planet



On average, every second five people are born. The global population is doubling every 40 years.

The human population has now hit 7 billion (as of 31st October 2011) and the rate of increase is speeding up all the time.

More and more land is being taken by humans for building, farming, roads, airports and reservoirs etc. Forests are being chopped down either because we want to use the wood or we need the land for other purposes.

The 'wild' land is shrinking all over the world as humans grab it for their own needs.

This is taking away the habitats of countless species of animals and plants ? and many of them will become extinct.

There are now more than 21,000 different species of animals threatened or endangered according to the 2000 IUCN Red List. Some 50% of the world's flora and fauna could be extinct within 100 years.

It is said that the world is already losing an estimated 137 species each DAY. This is how serious the problem is.

We are polluting our planet too ? causing poisoning of the land, air, and sea. The gases we are so carelessly generating here on Earth are drifting up into the atmosphere and causing great damage.

Some of these gases have created 'holes' in the fragile layer of gases we call the ozone layer ? and which act as a vital filter to protect us from the harmful rays of the sun. If we cause too much damage to the ozone layer it could have very serious consequences for the world ? and for all the animals and human life! Yet, we still go on using the gases that cause the damage!

Wonderful animal species like the elephant, rhino and whale are on the edge of extinction in the wild because of human stupidity and greed.

The elephant, which had a population of 1,450,00 in the 980s in Africa, is now down to about 500,000. These could quickly disappear unless the poachers can be stopped.

The blue whale may now be down to as few as 8,000 ? 12,000 survivors ? with little chance of being saved.

The five species of rhinoceros, totalling less than 12,400 animals, could disappear within the next 30 years.

Such is the sad and depressing state of our world at the present time.

The good news is that young people everywhere are taking a much keener interest in their world ? and they are growing up feeling determined that things have got to change for the better. This, I believe, is our greatest hope for the future.



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