

# Environmental awareness

There are many active players in the work of environmental awareness and conservation. These include:

- individuals (e.g. Gerald Durrell and the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust)
- groups (e.g. Greenpeace and the World Wide Fund for Nature)
- public servants, such as politicians and scientists (e.g. Al Gore, the former US vice president and author of *An Inconvenient Truth*; and Dian Fossey, made famous by the film *Gorillas in the Mist*).

In most cases there is a conflict between the need for economic development and the need for environmental

conservation or management. Dian Fossey argued for the protection of the mountain habitats in Rwanda and Burundi that are home to the great silverback gorillas. On the other hand, population growth, civil conflict and the illegal trade in forest products led to a decline in forest cover and a reduction in the gorillas' habitat.

There is an urgent need for strategic thinking and planning, especially in some of the world's most valuable biomes, such as coral reefs. This needs to be done in a sustainable way, with the cooperation of the indigenous people.

## THE ROLE OF GREENPEACE

Greenpeace is an international environmental organization founded in Vancouver, Canada in 1971. Its confrontational approach has secured it a high public profile, and helped develop strong support for the organization. It has tackled many issues, such as waste disposal, deforestation, nuclear

power, harvesting of seal cubs and industrial pollution. Greenpeace's goal is "to ensure the continuing ability of the earth to nurture life in all its diversity". It has a presence in over 40 countries.

## GREENPEACE

Greenpeace defines its mission as follows:

Greenpeace is a global campaigning organization that acts to change attitudes and behaviour, to protect and conserve the environment and to promote peace by:

- Catalyzing an energy revolution to address the number one threat facing our planet: climate change.
- Defending our oceans by challenging wasteful and destructive fishing, and creating a global network of marine reserves.

- Protecting the world's remaining ancient forests and the animal, plants and people that depend on them.
- Working for disarmament and peace by reducing dependence on finite resources and calling for the elimination of all nuclear weapons.
- Creating a toxic-free future with safer alternatives to hazardous chemicals in today's products and manufacturing.
- Supporting sustainable agriculture by encouraging socially and ecologically responsible farming practices.

Consequently, Greenpeace's main interests at present include:

- stopping climate change (global warming)
- preserving the oceans (including stopping whaling and seabed trawling)
- saving ancient forests
- campaigning for peace and nuclear disarmament
- promoting sustainable farming (and opposing genetic engineering)

- eliminating toxic chemicals, including from electronic (E-) waste, many of which are cancerous (carcinogenic).
- Greenpeace has been variously criticized, by governments, industrial and political lobbyists and other environmental groups, for being too radical, too mainstream (or not radical enough), for allegedly using methods bordering on ecoterrorism, for causing environmental damage, and for valuing non-human causes over human causes.

## WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE (WWF)



Formerly the World Wildlife Fund, the WWF was initially concerned with the protection of endangered species, but now includes all aspects of nature conservation, including landscapes (the environments in which species live). It has over 5 million supporters globally,

and is increasingly concerned with the fight against environmental destruction.

The WWF is interested in climate change and global warming; forests; freshwater ecosystems; marine ecosystems; species and biodiversity; sustainability; agriculture; toxins; macroeconomic policies, and trade and investment.

## EXTENSION

### Visit

[www.greenpeace.org.uk/](http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/) to find out more about the work of Greenpeace in any selected country. Choose from the dropdown box to select the region of interest to you.

The WWF works in recognized geographic areas, such as continents and countries, but also in ecoregions, large-scale geographic regions under threat from development. Examples include the Alps ecoregion and the Mekong ecoregion.

The WWF works with governments, NGOs, local peoples and businesses to find ways to protect the earth.