

# Sir David Attenborough joins world experts in calling for action for nature

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On the 12th of April, Sir David Attenborough joins the head of the UN's Convention on Biological Diversity and an expert panel from government, business and civil society to discuss how to mobilise global action to tackle what is said to be the greatest threat to humanity: the biodiversity crisis.



Sir David Attenborough will deliver the closing remarks at today's panel event © Sam Owen

*By BirdLife International*

**Public lecture and panel discussion: “Setting a new post-2020 biodiversity agenda – the communications challenge”, 12 April, Cambridge, UK**

*Experts warn that the loss of biodiversity is at least as great a threat to our planet as climate change - but how can we communicate this urgent concern in a way that will inspire action? This is the challenge we are aiming to tackle in this afternoon's panel, hosted at the Cambridge Conservation Initiative, home to BirdLife's Cambridge office. BirdLife CEO Patricia Zurita will feature on a panel of experts, with closing remarks from nature's mouthpiece, Sir David Attenborough.*

Dr Cristiana Paşca Palmer, Executive Secretary of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, commented: “By 2020, the end of the current UN Decade on Biodiversity, the world’s biodiversity is set to have declined by two-thirds. This unprecedented rate of destruction jeopardises not only the amazing variety of life on Earth, but the prospects for human development and well-being. We need a paradigm shift in the way that humans interact with nature; we need transformative change and a systemic approach to address the root causes of biological destruction.”

In 2020, the world’s governments will meet in Beijing, China, to agree a new framework for global action to tackle the biodiversity crisis over the next decade. It is critical that a strong, evidence-based biodiversity conservation strategy be agreed, linked to the climate and development agendas, and that momentum is built within the public and private sectors to inspire a movement for action and galvanise political urgency to deliver ambitious commitments post-2020.

| “*The future of all life now depends on us*” - Sir David Attenborough

Millions of viewers around the world watched the BBC’s landmark series [Blue Planet II](#) in 2017, which took an unflinching look at the impact of human activity on marine life and saw Sir David delivering a powerful rallying call to do more to protect the environment. “The future of all life now depends on us,” the BBC naturalist said in his closing speech of the final episode.

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Sir David will now return to the building that bears his name and which he proudly opened two years ago to address a booked-out audience. Leaning on his nearly 70 years’ experience of communicating the wonder of nature, he and the panel will consider how to galvanise governments, business, media and the general public to transform the complex messages surrounding biodiversity into understandable, effective and inspiring ones.

*The panel event will be livestreamed from 1500-1700 GMT on 12 April below:*

*The event can be followed on Twitter at [@CCI\\_Cambridge](#) and [#OurNatureOurFuture](#)*

This panel discussion is one of three events being hosted by the Cambridge Conservation Initiative in Cambridge, UK, from 10-13 April, led by BirdLife International, IUCN, the RSPB, the UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre and academics from the University of Cambridge:

- In addition to this public event, on 10-12 April there will be an invite-only meeting which will bring together scientists and policy-makers from all over the world to examine the evidence base needed to underpin the development of the new global biodiversity framework post-2020.
- On 13 April, experts in media and communications will meet to take part in a dialogue to examine the messages that best communicate the urgency of the biodiversity crisis to the public and create impact across sectors. The aim of the meeting is to create a

groundswell of support among key partners and to converge on a shared understanding of the need and methods to scale-up impactful biodiversity communication.

The panel discussion will be moderated by Richard Black, Director, Energy & Climate Intelligence Unit, with opening remarks by Mike Rands of the Cambridge Conservation Initiative and Professor Bill Sutherland of the University of Cambridge. Other panellists will include:

- Prudence Tangham Galega, Technical Adviser No. 1, Cabinet of the Minister, Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development, Cameroon
- Patricia Zurita, CEO, BirdLife International
- Helen Crowley, Head of Sustainable Sourcing Innovation, Kering.

Currently, governments have committed to achieve the *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020* and its 20 *Aichi Biodiversity Targets*, adopted in 2010. While some targets are on track, significant challenges remain in meeting others without continued and increased efforts; this is key to laying the foundation for the new post-2020 framework.



*David Attenborough abseiled down Cambridge Conservation Initiative's "green wall" to officially open the building © Toby Smith / CCI*

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## Host organisations

The **Cambridge Conservation Initiative** (CCI) is a unique collaboration between the University of Cambridge and leading internationally-focused biodiversity conservation organisations (BirdLife International, British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), Cambridge Conservation Forum (CCF), IUCN, Fauna & Flora International (FFI), RSPB, TRAFFIC, Tropical Biology Association (TBA) and the UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre) clustered in and around Cambridge, UK. CCI seeks to transform the global understanding and conservation of biodiversity and the natural capital it represents and, through this, secure a sustainable future for all life on Earth. The CCI partners together combine and integrate research, education, policy and practice to create innovative solutions for society and to foster conservation learning and leadership. Cambridge, UK is the hub of the largest cluster of conservation organisations in the world. Now, nearly ten years after it was founded, CCI has moved to its new location - a Conservation Campus in the heart of Cambridge - where leaders in academia, business, government and non-governmental organisations can interact and work together. [www.cambridgeconservation.org](http://www.cambridgeconservation.org)

Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and entering into force in December 1993, the **Convention on Biological Diversity** is an international treaty for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. With 196 Parties so far, the Convention has near universal participation among countries. The Convention seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, through scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, youth, NGOs, women and the business community. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing are supplementary agreements to the Convention. The Cartagena Protocol, which entered into force on 11 September 2003, seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 171 Parties have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Nagoya Protocol aims at sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies. It entered into force on 12 October 2014 and to date has been ratified by 105 Parties. For more information visit: [www.cbd.int](http://www.cbd.int) @CBDNews

**BirdLife International** is a global partnership of conservation organisations (NGOs) that strives to conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity, working with people towards sustainability in the use of natural resources. Together we are 121 BirdLife Partners worldwide – one per country or territory – and growing. We are driven by our belief that local people, working for nature in their own places but connected nationally and internationally through our global Partnership, are the key to sustaining all life on this planet. This unique local-to-global approach delivers high impact and long-term conservation for the benefit of nature and people. For more information visit: [www.birdlife.org](http://www.birdlife.org) @BirdLife\_News @BirdLife\_Policy

**IUCN** is a membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations. It provides public, private and non-governmental organisations with the knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development and nature conservation to take place together. Created in 1948, IUCN is now the world's largest and most diverse environmental network, harnessing the knowledge, resources and reach of more than 1,300 Member organisations and some 10,000 experts. It is a leading provider of conservation data, assessments and analysis. Its broad membership enables IUCN to fill the role of incubator and trusted repository of best practices, tools and international standards. IUCN provides a neutral space in which diverse stakeholders including governments, NGOs, scientists, businesses, local communities, indigenous peoples organisations and others can work together to forge and implement solutions to environmental challenges and achieve sustainable development. Working with many partners and supporters, IUCN implements a large and diverse portfolio of conservation projects worldwide. Combining the latest science with the traditional knowledge of local communities, these projects work to reverse habitat loss, restore ecosystems and improve people's well-being. For more information visit: [www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org) <https://twitter.com/IUCN/>

The **RSPB** is the UK's largest nature conservation charity, inspiring everyone to give nature a home. Together with our partners, we protect threatened birds and wildlife so our towns, coast and countryside will teem with life once again. We play a leading role in BirdLife International, a worldwide partnership of nature conservation organisations. For more information visit: [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

The **UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre** (UNEP-WCMC) is a world leader in biodiversity knowledge. We work with a global network of scientists and policymakers to place biodiversity and natural capital at the heart of environment and development decision-making. By improving access to high-quality information and analyses, we empower global leaders enlightened choices for people and the planet. [www.unep-wcmc.org](http://www.unep-wcmc.org)

The **University of Cambridge** is one of the world's leading universities, committed to excellence in teaching and research across a broad range of disciplines. The University of Cambridge has a number of research groups working in conservation-related research and provides a wide range of education opportunities in conservation from undergraduate teaching, through graduate training to executive education. In September 2013 the University of Cambridge established the University of Cambridge Conservation Research Institute which oversees the University's role within the CCI. Six University departments are founder members of CCI: the Department of Zoology, the Department of Plant Sciences, the Department of Geography, the Department of Land Economy, the Cambridge Judge Business School and the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership. For more information visit: [www.cam.ac.uk](http://www.cam.ac.uk)