



ARIZONA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

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Arizona Wildlife Federation Position Statement on Population Growth

Changes to our landscape and wildlife habitat worldwide is occurring at a faster pace and on a larger scale than ever before. Scientists agree that this change is driven principally by global population growth, resulting in deforestation, the expansion of agricultural land, and the pollution of air, water, and soil.

The Arizona Wildlife Federation believes in the importance of balance among population, natural resources, and wildlife. To ensure such a balance, it is essential that population growth be restrained. When people have the ability to choose the number and spacing of their children, they often have smaller, healthier families and this reduces pressure on natural resources and wildlife.

The world's population was less than 10 million people for most of humankind's existence. The world's current population is 6.14 billion people. At current growth rates the world's population will more than double in 53 years, to a mind boggling 15 billion people.

This growth has occurred in spite of the fact that the average global fertility rate of 5 births per woman in 1950 has dropped to the current rate of 2.8 births per woman. In spite of this drop, approximately 77 million people are added to the planet each year, in absolute numbers.

No one really knows how many people the earth can sustain, but we do know that sustaining our current population of 6.14 billion people is having a devastating impact on our environment and natural resources globally. Death by starvation is still the fate of many people throughout the world.

Total consumption of water has increased steadily due to population growth. By 2025, two-thirds of the world's population will be living in water stress conditions.

In order to ensure sufficient water and other natural resources necessary to sustain people and wildlife, AWF advocates for slowing population growth through increased domestic and international voluntary family planning assistance. AWF also advocates for our government to honor family planning funding commitments it has made to the international community in the past. United States leadership is critical to addressing the issue of finding a balance among population, natural resources, and wildlife.