ESSENTIAL POINTS FOR POLICY MAKERS

Scientists’ Consensus on
Maintaining Humanity’s Life Support Systems in the 21st Century

Earth is at a tipping point. Human impacts are causing alarming levels of harm to our planet. How we manage those impacts in the next few decades is critical for maintaining a high quality of life. As scientists who study the interaction of people with the rest of the biosphere from a wide range of approaches, we agree that the evidence that humans are damaging their ecological life-support systems is overwhelming.

*We further agree that, based on the best scientific information available, human quality of life will suffer substantial degradation by the year 2050 if we continue on our current path.*

Science unequivocally demonstrates the human impacts of key concern:

- **Climate disruption**—more, faster climate change than since humans first became a species.

- **Extinctions**—not since the dinosaurs went extinct have so many species and populations died out so fast, both on land and in the oceans.

- **Wholesale loss of diverse ecosystems**—we have plowed, paved, or otherwise transformed more than 40% of Earth’s ice-free land, and no place on land or in the sea is free of our direct or indirect influences.

- **Pollution**—environmental contaminants in the air, water and land are at record levels and increasing, seriously harming people and wildlife in unforeseen ways.

- **Human population growth and consumption patterns**—seven billion people alive today will likely grow to 9.5 billion by 2050, and the pressures of heavy material consumption among the middle class and wealthy may well intensify.

By the time today’s children reach middle age, it is extremely likely that Earth’s life-support systems, critical for human prosperity and existence, will be irretrievably damaged by the magnitude, global extent, and combination of these human-caused environmental stressors, **unless we take concrete, immediate actions to ensure a sustainable, high-quality future.**

*As members of the scientific community actively involved in assessing the biological and societal impacts of global change, we are sounding this alarm to the world. For humanity’s continued health and prosperity, we all—individuals, businesses, political leaders, religious leaders, scientists, and people in every walk of life—must work hard to solve these five global problems, starting today:*

1. Climate Disruption
2. Extinctions
3. Loss of Ecosystem Diversity
4. Pollution
5. Human Population Growth and Resource Consumption
### Overview of Problems and Broad-Brush Solutions

#### Climate Disruption

*Reduce effects of climate disruption by decreasing greenhouse gas emissions, and by implementing adaptation strategies to deal with the consequences of climate change already underway.* Viable approaches include accelerating development and deployment of carbon-neutral energy technologies to replace fossil fuels; making buildings, transportation, manufacturing systems, and settlement patterns more energy-efficient; and conserving forests and regulating land conversion to maximize carbon sequestration. Adapting to the inevitable effects of climate change will be crucial for coastal areas threatened by sea-level rise; ensuring adequate water supplies to many major population centers; maintaining agricultural productivity; and for managing biodiversity and ecosystem reserves.

#### Extinctions

*Slow the very high extinction rates that are leading to a global loss of biodiversity.* Viable approaches include assigning economic valuation to the ways natural ecosystems contribute to human well-being; and managing all ecosystems, both in human-dominated regions and in regions far from direct human influence, to sustain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystem services. It will be critical to develop cross-jurisdictional cooperation to recognize and mitigate the interactions of global pressures (for example, climate change, ocean acidification) and local pressures (land transformation, overfishing, poaching endangered species, etc.).

#### Ecosystem Transformation

*Minimize transformation of Earth’s remaining natural ecosystems into farms, suburbs, and other human constructs.* Viable agricultural approaches include increasing efficiency in existing food-producing areas; improving food-distribution systems; and decreasing waste. Viable development approaches include enhancing urban landscapes to accommodate growth rather than encouraging suburban sprawl; siting infrastructure to minimize impacts on natural ecosystems; and investing in vital ‘green infrastructure,’ such as through restoring wetlands, oyster reefs, and forests to secure water quality, flood control, and boost access to recreational benefits.

#### Pollution

*Curb the manufacture and release of toxic substances into the environment.* Viable approaches include using current science about the molecular mechanisms of toxicity and applying the precautionary principle (verification of no harmful effects) to guide regulation of existing chemicals and design of new ones. We have the knowledge and ability to develop a new generation of materials that are inherently far safer than what is available today.

**Overall, we urge the use of the best science available to anticipate most-likely, worst-case, and best-case scenarios for 50 years into the future, in order to emplace policies that guide for environmental health over the long-term as well as adapting to immediate crises.**

#### Population Growth and Consumption

*Bring world population growth to an end as early as possible and begin a gradual decline.* An achievable target is no more than 8.5 billion people by 2050 and a peak population size of no more than 9 billion, which through natural demographic processes can decrease to less than 7 billion by 2100. Viable approaches include ensuring that everyone has access to education, economic opportunities, and health care, including family planning services, with a special focus on women’s rights. Decrease *per-capita resource use, particularly in developed countries.* Viable approaches include improving efficiency in production, acquisition, trade, and use of goods and promoting environmentally-friendly changes in consumer behavior.
Statement Drafted Through Collaboration of:


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Signed By:

By providing my name, professional position, and institutional affiliation as noted below, I indicate that I agree that concerted efforts must begin immediately to halt climate disruption, extinctions, ecosystem loss, environmental contamination, and human population growth and over-consumption. I agree that the best scientific evidence available indicates that if we do not take action to immediately reverse these dangerous trends, the world of our children will be substantially degraded with respect to what we have today.

AS OF 5-2-13 08:30 A.M.

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DATE: April 25, 2013

NAME: Timothy D. Meehan
POSITION: Associate Scientist
INSTITUTION: Wisconsin Energy Institute, University of Wisconsin-Madison
DATE: 29 May 2013

NAME: Natalia Gañán Mejías
POSITION: Postdoctoral researcher
INSTITUTION: Unaffiliated
DATE: 26/04/2013

NAME: Sarah Keene Meltzoff
POSITION: Associate Professor
INSTITUTION: Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science, University of Miami
DATE: 28 April 2013
NAME: Katrin Meissner  
POSITION: Associate Professor  
INSTITUTION: University of New South Wales  
DATE: 29/04/2013

NAME: Santiago Merino  
POSITION: Professor of Research  
INSTITUTION: Higher Council for Scientific Research (CSIC-SPAIN)  
DATE: 25-04-2013

NAME: Fiorenza Micheli  
POSITION: Professor  
INSTITUTION: Stanford University, Hopkins Marine Station  
DATE: 25 April 2013

NAME: Brian Miller, Ph.D.  
POSITION: Senior Scientist  
INSTITUTION: Wind River Ranch Foundation, PO Box 27, Watrous NM 87753  
DATE: April 25, 2013

NAME: Brent D. Mishler  
POSITION: Professor of Integrative Biology, Director of the University and Jepson Herbaria  
INSTITUTION: University of California, Berkeley  
DATE: April 29, 2013

NAME: Arne O. Mooers  
POSITION: Professor of Biodiversity  
INSTITUTION: Simon Fraser University, Canada  
DATE: April 25, 2013

NAME: Harold A. Mooney  
POSITION: Professor Emeritus, Department of Biology, and Senior Fellow, Woods Institute  
INSTITUTION: Stanford University  
DATE: April 23, 2013

NAME: Juan Moreno  
POSITION: Research Professor CSIC (Spanish Council for Scientific Research)  
INSTITUTION: Department of Evolutionary Ecology, National Museum of Natural Sciences (CSIC), Madrid, Spain  
DATE: 26 April 2013

NAME: John Peterson Myers  
POSITION: CEO and Chief Scientist  
INSTITUTION: Environmental Health Sciences, Charlottesville, Virginia  
DATE: April 23, 2013

NAME: Atle Mysterud  
POSITION: Professor  
INSTITUTION: University of Oslo, Norway  
DATE: 25. April 2013

NAME: Rasmus Nielsen  
POSITION: Professor, Department of Environmental Earth System Science  
INSTITUTION: Hopkins Marine Station, Stanford University, California, Berkeley  
DATE: 24 APRIL, 2013

NAME: John C. Ogden  
POSITION: Emeritus Professor  
INSTITUTION: University of South Florida (USF)  
DATE: April 30, 2013

NAME: Otso Ovaskainen  
POSITION: Professor  
INSTITUTION: University of Helsinki, Finland  
DATE: April 25th 2013

NAME: Kevin Padian  
POSITION: Professor and Curator  
INSTITUTION: University of California, Berkeley  
DATE: 4/29/2013

NAME: Luis F. Pacheco  
POSITION: PROFESSOR AND RESEARCHER  
INSTITUTION: INSTITUTO DE ECOLOGÍA, UNIVERSIDAD MAYOR DE SAN ANDRÉS, LA PAZ, BOLIVIA  
DATE: 24 APRIL, 2013

NAME: Stephen Palumbi  
POSITION: Professor, Department of Biology and Director, Hopkins Marine Station, Stanford University  
DATE: April 23, 2013

NAME: John M. Pandolfi  
POSITION: Professor  
INSTITUTION: UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN  
DATE: 25-APRIL-2013

NAME: Karen Oberhauser  
POSITION: Professor  
INSTITUTION: University of Minnesota  
DATE: 4/29/2013

NAME: David Nogués-Bravo  
POSITION: ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR  
INSTITUTION: UNIVERSITY OF SPAIN  
DATE: 0

NAME: NORET Nausicaa  
POSITION: ASSISTANT PROFESSOR  
INSTITUTION: UNIVERSITE LIBRE DE BRUXELLES  
DATE: 30 04 2013

NAME: Rosamond L. Naylor  
POSITION: Director, Program on Food Security and the Environment and Professor, Department of Environmental Earth System Science  
INSTITUTION: Stanford University  
DATE: April 23, 2013

NAME: Ioan Negrutiu  
POSITION: Professor biology  
INSTITUTION: ENS Lyon, Michel Serres Institute  
DATE: April 25, 2013

NAME: Graciela G. Nicola  
POSITION: FULL PROFESSOR  
INSTITUTION: UNIVERSITY OF CASTILLA-LA MANCHA (UCLM), SPAIN  
DATE: 29/04/2013

NAME: Rasmus Nielsen  
POSITION: Professor  
INSTITUTION: University of California - Berkeley  
DATE: April 29 2013
INSTITUTION: University of Queensland, Brisbane, Queensland, AUSTRALIA
DATE: 26 April 2013

NAME: Mario Garcia Paris
POSITION: Permanent Researcher (Investigador Cientifico)
INSTITUTION: MNCN-CSIC (Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales-Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, Spain)
DATE: 25/April/2013

NAME: James L. Patton, PhD
POSITION: Curator and Professor Emeritus
INSTITUTION: Museum of Vertebrate Zoology and Department of Integrative Biology, University of California, Berkeley
DATE: 25 April 2013

NAME: Jonathan L. Payne
PROFESSIONAL POSITION: Associate Professor
INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION: Dept. of Geological & Environmental Sciences, Stanford University
DATE: April 28, 2013

NAME: Kabir G. Peay
POSITION: Assistant Professor
INSTITUTION: Stanford University
DATE: 4/25/2013

NAME: Melissa Pespeni
POSITION: National Science Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow in Biology
INSTITUTION: Indiana University
DATE: April 25, 2013

NAME: Stuart Pimm
POSITION: Doris Duke Chair of Conservation
INSTITUTION: Duke University
DATE: 28th April 2013

NAME: Stephanie Pincetl, PhD
POSITION: Adjunct Professor, Director, Center for Sustainable Communities, Institute of the Environment and Sustainability
INSTITUTION: UCLA
DATE: April 26, 2013

NAME: Malin L. Pinsky
POSITION: David H. Smith Conservation Research Fellow
INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION: Princeton University
DATE: April 24, 2013

NAME: Miguel Pinto
POSITION: PhD Student
INSTITUTION: American Museum of Natural History
DATE: 25 April 2013

NAME: P. David Polly
POSITION: Professor
INSTITUTION: Department of Geological Sciences, Indiana University
DATE: 25 April 2013

NAME: Warren P. Porter
POSITION: Professor of Zoology and Professor of Environmental Toxicology
INSTITUTION: University of Wisconsin, Madison
DATE: 25 April 2013

NAME: Hugh Possingham
POSITION: Professor and Centre Director
INSTITUTION: The University of Queensland
DATE: 25 April 2013

NAME: Malcolm Potts
POSITION: Professor, School of Public Health
INSTITUTION: University of California-Berkeley
DATE: April 25, 2013

NAME: Daniel Press
POSITION: Olga T. Griswold Professor, Environmental Studies Department and Executive Director, Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems
INSTITUTION: University of California, Santa Cruz
DATE: April 28, 2013

NAME: Aili Pyhälä
POSITION: Postdoctoral Researcher
INSTITUTION: Department of Biosciences, University of Helsinki
DATE: 25th April 2013

NAME: Dr Graham H. Pyke
POSITION: Distinguished Professor
INSTITUTION: School of the Environment, University of Technology Sydney
DATE: 26 April 2013

NAME: Paul A Racey
POSITION: Co-Chair, IUCN Bat Specialist Group
INSTITUTION: Regius Professor of Natural History (Emeritus), University of Aberdeen.
Honorary Visiting Professor, University of Exeter in Cornwall
DATE: 30 April 2013

NAME: Dr. John E. Rawlins
POSITION: Curator of Invertebrate Zoology
INSTITUTION: Carnegie Museum of Natural History
DATE: 1 May 2013

NAME: Harry F. Recher
POSITION: Emeritus Professor
INSTITUTION: Edith Cowan University, School of Natural Sciences, Joondalup, Western Australia, Australia
DATE: 26 April 2013

NAME: William E. Rees, PhD, FRSC
POSITION: Professor Emeritus
INSTITUTION: University of British Columbia
DATE: 26 April 2013

NAME: Klaus Rohde
POSITION: Professor Emeritus
INSTITUTION: University of New England, Armidale, Australia
DATE: 26.4.2013

NAME: Jonathan Rhodes
POSITION: Senior Lecturer
INSTITUTION: The University of Queensland
DATE: 29th April 2013

NAME: Brett R. Riddle
POSITION: Professor
INSTITUTION: University of Nevada Las Vegas
DATE: 26 April 2013

NAME: Annapaola Rizzoli
POSITION: DVM, PhD, Animal Ecology Research Group Leader
INSTITUTION: Research and Innovation Centre, Department of Biodiversity and Molecular Ecology, Edmund Mach Foundation, San Michele all'Adige (TN), Italy
DATE: 26/04/2013

NAME: Dr Lisa Roberts
POSITION: Visiting Fellow, Environmental Science / Design
INSTITUTION: University of Technology, Sydney
DATE: 29 April 2013

NAME: John G. Robinson, Ph.D.
POSITION: Executive Vice President, Conservation and Science
INSTITUTION: Wildlife Conservation
NAME: Johan Rockström
POSITION: Professor, Water systems and Global Sustainability; Director, Stockholm Resilience Centre
INSTITUTION: Stockholm University
DATE: April 25, 2013

NAME: Antonio González Rodríguez
POSITION: Researcher
INSTITUTION: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México
DATE: April 27th, 2013

NAME: Helen Rowe
POSITION: Assistant Research Professor
INSTITUTION: School of Life Sciences, Arizona State University
DATE: 4-26-2013

NAME: Fabrizio Sergio
POSITION: Researcher (permanent post)
INSTITUTION: Estacion Biologica de Donana - Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Seville, Spain
DATE: 25 April 2013

NAME: DAVID SERRANO
POSITION: ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
INSTITUTION: EBD-CSIC
DATE: 25 April 2013

NAME: Michael Shapira
POSITION: Adjunct assistant professor
INSTITUTION: Department of Integrative biology, UC Berkeley
DATE: 4/29/13

NAME: Steven Sherwood
POSITION: Professor, Director of the Climate Change Research Centre
INSTITUTION: University of New South Wales
DATE: 1 May 2013

NAME: Anne Sheppard
POSITION: Research Assistant
INSTITUTION: School of Life Sciences, University of Warwick, UK.
DATE: 26th April 2013

NAME: Richard Shine
POSITION: Professor in Biology
INSTITUTION: University of Sydney
DATE: 26 April 2013

NAME: Candida Shinn
POSITION: post-doctoral researcher
INSTITUTION: IMAR - Instituto do Mar
DATE: 25.4.2013

NAME: Fernando Simal
POSITION: Manager, Natural and Historic Resources Unit
INSTITUTION: STINAPA Bonaire
DATE: April 26th, 2013

NAME: Ellen L. Simms
POSITION: Professor, Integrative Biology
INSTITUTION: University of California, Berkeley
DATE: 29 April 2013

NAME: Adam B. Smith
POSITION: Postdoctoral Researcher
INSTITUTION: Center for Conservation and Sustainable Development, Missouri Botanical Garden
DATE: April 25th, 2013

NAME: Kirk R. Smith
POSITION: Professor of Global Environmental Health
INSTITUTION: University of California Berkeley
DATE: April 25, 2013

NAME: Dr. Allison A. Snow
POSITION: Professor of Biology
INSTITUTION: Ohio State University
DATE: April 25, 2013

NAME: Manuel Soler
POSITION: Full Professor
INSTITUTION: Department of Zoology, Granada University, Spain
DATE: 25 April 2013

NAME: Michael Soule
POSITION: Emeritus Professor,
INSTITUTION: UCSC
DATE: 4-25-13

NAME: Wayne P. Sousa
POSITION: Professor
INSTITUTION: Department of Integrative Biology, University of California, Berkeley
DATE: April 29, 2013

NAME: Donald W. Spady MD, MSc.
POSITION: Adjunct Associate Professor of Pediatrics & Public Health
INSTITUTION: Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry, and School of Public Health, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada
DATE: April 28, 2013

NAME: Chelsea Specht
POSITION: Associate Professor and Curator
INSTITUTION: University of California, Berkeley
DATE: 29 April 2013

NAME: Nils Christian Stenseth
POSITION: Leader, Center for Ecological and Evolutionary Synthesis, and Chief Scientist, Norwegian Institute of Marine Research
INSTITUTION: University of Oslo
DATE: April 21, 2013

NAME: Simon N. Stuart, PhD
POSITION: Visiting Professor, Department of Biology and Biochemistry, University of Bath
INSTITUTION: Chair, Species Survival Commission, International Union for Conservation of Nature; Senior Biodiversity Advisor, Conservation International; Senior Biodiversity Advisor, World Conservation Monitoring Centre
DATE: 30 April 2013

NAME: Jonathon Stillman
POSITION: Associate Professor - and - Adjunct Assistant Professor
INSTITUTION: San Francisco State University - and - University of California Berkeley
DATE: April 29, 2013

NAME: Dr. David Suzuki, Emeritus
NAME: Andrew Sasz
POSITION: Professor of Environmental Studies
INSTITUTION: University of California, Santa Cruz
DATE: April 26, 2013

NAME: Alina M. Szmant
POSITION: Professor of Marine Biology
INSTITUTION: Center for Marine Science, University of North Carolina at Wilmington
DATE: April 25, 2013

NAME: Gary M. Tabor
POSITION: Executive Director
INSTITUTION: Center for Large Landscape Conservation
DATE: April 26, 2013

NAME: Celine Teplitsky
POSITION: Research scientist
INSTITUTION: CNRS & French Natural History Museum
DATE: 29/04/2013

NAME: John Terborgh
POSITION: Research Professor, Nicholas School of the Environment and Earth Sciences
INSTITUTION: Duke University
DATE: April 29, 2013

NAME: John N. Thompson
POSITION: Distinguished Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
INSTITUTION: University of California, Santa Cruz
DATE: 30 April 2013

NAME: Alan Townsend
POSITION: Professor, Dept of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Fellow, Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research
INSTITUTION: University of Colorado, Boulder
DATE: April 25, 2013

NAME: ANNA TRAVESET
POSITION: RESEARCH PROFESSOR
INSTITUTION: SPANISH RESEARCH COUNCIL
DATE: APRIL 26, 2013

NAME: Marcel van Tuinen
POSITION: Associate Professor
INSTITUTION: UNC at Wilmington
DATE: 4/25/13

NAME: James W. Valentine
POSITION: Professor of Integrative Biology, Emeritus
INSTITUTION: UC Berkeley
DATE: April 19, 2013

NAME: Fernando Valladares
POSITION: Research Professor
INSTITUTION: Spanish Council for Scientific Research (CSIC)
DATE: April 24, 2013

NAME: Montserrat Vila
POSITION: Research Professor
INSTITUTION: estación Biológica de Doñana (EBD-CSIC)
DATE: April 25th, 2013

NAME: Geerat J. Vermeij
POSITION: Distinguished Professor of Geology, Department of Geology
INSTITUTION: University of California at Davis
DATE: April 25, 2013

NAME: Peter Vitousek
POSITION: Professor
INSTITUTION: Stanford University
DATE: April 26, 2013

NAME: Mathis Wackernagel, Ph.D.
POSITION: President, Global Footprint Network, and Visiting Professor
INSTITUTION: Cornell University
DATE: 28 April 2013

NAME: David B. Wake
POSITION: Professor of the Graduate School in Integrative Biology
INSTITUTION: University of California at Berkeley
DATE: April 25, 2013

NAME: Marvalee H. Wake
POSITION: Professor of the Graduate School, Department of Integrative Biology
INSTITUTION: University of California-Berkeley
DATE: April 25, 2013

NAME: Diana H. Wall
POSITION: University Distinguished Professor and School of Global Environmental Sustainability
INSTITUTION: Colorado State University
DATE: April 25, 2013

NAME: Don Waller
POSITION: John T. Curtis Professor of Botany and Chair, Department of Botany, Biological Aspects of Conservation Major, Wisconsin Ecology
INSTITUTION: University of Wisconsin – Madison
DATE: April 26, 2013

NAME: Dr Haydn Washington
POSITION: Visiting Fellow, Institute of Environmental Studies
INSTITUTION: University of New South Wales (Australia)
DATE: 29 April 2013

NAME: Les Watling
POSITION: Professor
INSTITUTION: University of Hawaii at Manoa
DATE: 26 April 2013

NAME: David M Watson
POSITION: Associate Professor in Ecology
INSTITUTION: Charles Sturt University
DATE: 26 April 2013

NAME: Andrew Weaver
POSITION: Lansdowne Professor and Canada Research Chair
INSTITUTION: School of Earth and Ocean Sciences, University of Victoria
DATE: April 25, 2013

NAME: Anthony LeRoy Westerling
POSITION: Associate Professor, Geography and Environmental Engineering
INSTITUTION: Sierra Nevada Research Institute, University of California, Merced
DATE: April 26, 2013

NAME: Tim D. White
POSITION: Professor, Department of Integrative Biology
INSTITUTION: The University of California at Berkeley
DATE: May 1, 2013

NAME: Ruscena Wiederholt
POSITION: Assistant Research Scientist
INSTITUTION: University of Arizona
DATE: 4/25/13

NAME: Susan L. Williams
POSITION: Professor
INSTITUTION: Dept. of Evolution & Ecology and Bodega Marine Laboratory, University of California at Davis
DATE: 25 April 2013

NAME: Dawn J. Wright, Ph.D., GISP
POSITION: Chief Scientist
INSTITUTION: Environmental Systems Research Institute (Esri)
DATE: April 26, 2013
NAME: Norman Yan, PhD, FRSC
POSITION: Professor
INSTITUTION: York University, Toronto, Canada
DATE: April 28, 2013

NAME: Kelly R. Zamudio

NAME: Jake Vander Zanden
POSITION: Professor
INSTITUTION: University of Wisconsin-Madison
DATE: 4/25/2013

NAME: Joy B. Zedler
POSITION: Professor of Botany and Aldo Leopold Chair of Restoration Ecology
INSTITUTION: University of Wisconsin-Madison
DATE: 4/30/2013