

NEGATIVE POPULATION GROWTH

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Press Release

For immediate release

New NPG Forum Paper Connects Overpopulation with the Endangered Species Act

New Paper Urges Critical Action to Lower Extinction Rates of Endangered Species

Alexandria, VA, (January 25, 2022): The Endangered Species Act (ESA) was amended to acknowledge the extinction of 23 species in 2021. Today, Negative Population Growth, Inc. has published a new forum paper titled ***On the Wrong Track: Why the Endangered Species Act Isn't Enough***, which explores the connection between the human population and species welfare, with particular consideration given to the species currently listed in the ESA. Written by Dr. Karen I. Shragg, a life-long environmentalist and author of *Move Upstream, A Call to Solve Overpopulation*, this work challenges the reader to think critically about human action and its effect on other species. Shragg begins by noting that we are, collectively as a planet, currently living in the sixth mass extinction period. She then succinctly points out: “The previous extinctions were caused by catastrophic climatic and atmospheric events. Now the blame can be laid at the feet of humans, not only due to our fossil fuel consumption habits but also by our sheer, overwhelming numbers.” By highlighting the lack of human presence during previous mass extinctions, Shragg places the demise of so many species squarely on the shoulders of humankind.

Shragg bolsters her argument by showcasing the undesirable consequences of growth, sharing: “Growth of the entire human enterprise is behind the decline of the natural world. Our fossil fuel-based global economies are structured so that they must grow or die, so they do, eating up the natural capital of water, minerals, wood, etc., along the way... We have created a human-dominated planet to the point where there are now more people living in the US than were living on the entire planet back in the day when Christianity first began.” She then rightfully surmises that we cannot mourn the loss of species from the ESA without acknowledging human population growth and rate of consumption.

Next, Shragg righteously calls on all conservation organizations to address overpopulation, noting: “Our most well-known conservation organizations and their members do everything but address human numbers. They preserve, educate, lobby for dollars, and make slick magazines with beautiful animals on their shiny covers... We need to be seeing our growing population numbers on the front covers of conservation magazines to explain how our bloated presence is driving so many species to appear on the infamous list of extinct animals.”

Leaning further into the issue, Shragg denounces euphemisms used to describe the degradation of our landscape

and suggests replacing vagueness with a straightforward discussion about overpopulation, stating: “We have not tried to save wildlife by doing what would have really worked, ratcheting down our numbers and recognizing which laws, policies and economic systems are surreptitiously working to help us grow when we need to be shrinking the entire human enterprise away from the end of extinction of all life.” After touching on the work necessary to tackle extinction on a local level, Shragg then counters the narrative that “talking about population is bad” by arguing that speaking out on overpopulation is, in fact, actually an act of compassion, saying: “If conservationists who are passionate about wildlife can finally grasp that this is overpopulation and its continued growth which is fueling the 6th mass extinction, then it shouldn’t be too far of a reach to understand and address how we are growing.”

In closing, Shragg reminds her readers that talking about overpopulation is paramount if we (humans) want to move forward successfully while causing less harm to the species and spaces surrounding us. The connection between species extinction and overpopulation is undeniable. Shragg makes her final plea to readers, sharing: “Without a focus on the wildlife consequences of US population size and growth, we will continue to mourn some of the most important and beautiful animals our world has ever known.”

Founded in 1972, NPG is a national nonprofit membership organization dedicated to educating the American public and political leaders regarding the damaging effects of population growth. We believe that our nation is already vastly overpopulated in terms of the long-range carrying capacity of its resources and environment. NPG advocates the adoption of its [Proposed National Population Policy](#), with the goal of eventually stabilizing U.S. population at a sustainable level – far lower than today’s. We do not simply identify the problems – we propose solutions. For more information, visit our website at NPG.org, follow us on Facebook [@NegativePopulationGrowth](#) or follow us on Twitter [@npg_org](#).