

Halting the extinction of species

In a study published last February in the Ecography journal, a consortium of experts¹ analysed the geographical redistribution of endangered animal and plant species. In light of the COP 15 focused on biodiversity, several solutions for protecting them have been put forward.

Climate change and habitat loss are the two main threats to the conservation of fauna and flora. This study, which was conducted on several continents and which took into account a large number of species, revealed that the extinction of species could be limited by efficiently managing these two factors. The mass extinction of animals and plants could be reduced by half by cutting greenhouse gas emissions and protecting tropical lands. One line of action to focus on is to significantly increase the planet's protected areas.

#1

Climate change continues to alter the natural habitats of certain species and forces organisms to either migrate or adapt to their new life circumstances. Researchers have analysed the current and future distribution of over 104,059 animal and plant species in South America, Africa and Asia. This was the largest data collection to date, which highlights the inadequacy of studies carried out so far to measure the combined impact of limiting climate change and extending protected areas.

#2

Scientists have produced a model for calculating the risk of extinction of species that live on today's tropical lands (17%). They reached the conclusion that by protecting 30% of these lands, as well as reducing greenhouse gas emissions (by limiting climate change to 2°C), the risk of extinction could drop by over 50%.

#3

These results should guide United Nations officials at the COP 15, which has been postponed to the week of 17 to 31 May 2021 in Kunming, China. Protecting at least 30% of the Earth's lands and oceans by 2030 is a crucial goal: some organisms will be unable to adapt to the extinction or displacement of other species on which they depend, which is why it is necessary to broaden protected areas.

The opinion of Géraud Guibert, the Chairman of LFE

The goal of protecting 30% of lands and oceans is far from reached (currently 15%). According to scientists, this should become a key priority for public policy.

1 including Lee Hannah, Patrick R. Roehrdanz and Pablo A. Marquet