

Humans speed natural species extinction by 1,000 years

First the bad news. Humans are driving species to extinction at around 1000 times the natural rate, at the top of the range of an earlier estimate. We also don't know how many species we can afford to lose.

Now the good news. Armed with your smartphone, you can help conservationists save them.

The new estimate of the global rate of extinction comes from Stuart Pimm of Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, and colleagues. It updates a calculation Pimm's team released in 1995, that human activities were driving species out of existence at 100 to 1000 times the background rate (Science, doi.org/fq2sfs).

It turns out that Pimm's earlier calculations both underestimated the rate at which species are now disappearing, and overestimated the background rate over the past 10 to 20 million years.

Read the full, original story: [We are killing species at 1000 times the natural rate](#)