



# Population

## and the UK's environment and conservation organisations

**Over the past year, Robin Maynard<sup>1</sup> has been seeking to engage the UK's main environmental NGOs with the issue of the continuing growth in global human population and the consequent impacts upon the planet, its environment, ecosystems, other species – and of course, the well-being and sustainability of our own species.**

A series of briefings were drafted setting out the key facts and statistics as to, '**Why Population Matters for ....**' And sent with an accompanying letter to:

**Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE); Friends of the Earth; Greenpeace ; National Trust; Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), The Wildlife Trusts; the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust; Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF-UK) – and the conservation umbrella body, Wildlife Link.**

For the past four decades, conservation and environment groups have focused on the factor of consumption to the exclusion of the population – yet consumption continues to increase despite over four decades of campaigning seeking to persuade people to curb their global footprint. Two recent reports, the Royal Society's 'People and the planet'<sup>2</sup> and the 'Living Planet Report 2012'<sup>3</sup>, highlight the need to include human population growth as a key factor impacting upon our planet and its sustainability for our and all species on Earth as well as consumption:

***"Population and the environment should not be considered as two separate issues"***

**People and the planet, Royal Society, April 2012.**

***"With the world already in ecological overshoot, continued growth in population and person footprint is clearly not a sustainable path"***

**Living Planet Report 2012.**

Those reports provided the rationale for

approaching the NGOs and asking them to engage more actively and publicly with the issue of human population growth and its impacts upon their areas of concern. Responses from the NGOs were ranked according to 10 criteria:

- Speed of response
- Acceptance of offer to meet and discuss issue
- Acknowledgement that population is a factor that needs to be taken into account
- Openness to consult supporters/ members
- Commitment to producing a current policy position (taking into account latest reports)
- Putting that position or anything about population up on their website
- Sign-up to all or any of the above 6 Take Action points
- 'Natural Fit' between their organisation and having a position on population
- Best explanation for position/non-position
- Worst explanation for position/non-position.

**On the basis of the above criteria with some adjustment for detail the ranking is as follows (1= best; 8 = worst),**

- 1. Friends of the Earth**
- 2. The Wildlife Trusts**
- 3. CPRE**
- 4. Greenpeace**
- 5. RSPB**
- 6. Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust**
- 7. National Trust**
- 8. WWF-UK**

### References

<sup>1</sup> Robin Maynard is a free-lance environmental campaigner and writer. He has worked for several NGOs over the past 25 years including Friends of the Earth, FARM and the Soil Association.

<sup>2</sup> <http://royalsociety.org/policy/projects/people-planet/report/>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.wwf.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/about\\_us/living\\_planet\\_report\\_2012/](http://www.wwf.org.uk/what_we_do/about_us/living_planet_report_2012/)

This briefing is an independent report drafted by Robin Maynard and edited and overseen by Jonathon Porritt.

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### Photos

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