

Target 04:

Halt Species Extinction, Protect Genetic Diversity, and Manage Human-Wildlife Conflicts



WHY THIS MATTERS FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

This target offers an opportunity to apply Indigenous Peoples' knowledge to prevent species loss and encourage co-existence between Indigenous Peoples and wild animals, but also could harm Indigenous Peoples if external activities and laws disrupt ecosystems or do not respect customary practices.

This target relates to species extinction, genetic diversity and human-wildlife conflict - all important issues for Indigenous Peoples.



Ogiek community scout mapper and elephant tracker using Mapeo to collect data on a sacred cave used by elephants, Mount Elgon, Kenya. Credit: Tom Rowley, FPP

Indigenous Peoples have close, reciprocal relationships with a wide variety of species on their lands and waters. As a result, many species have enormous cultural importance for Indigenous Peoples, including sometimes being considered as kin or relatives. As a result, species loss harms not only biodiversity but also the cultural and spiritual life of Indigenous Peoples.

Precisely because of their close relationships with many species in their territories, Indigenous Peoples also often hold critical knowledge on why and how species are being lost in their territories, and on how best to protect and/or sustainably use these species. This knowledge means Indigenous Peoples can play an important role in stopping species from becoming rare or extinct.

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Similarly, Indigenous Peoples play a key role in supporting genetic diversity – that is, maintaining a variety of different genes within a particular species. For example, Indigenous food systems often include locally-specific varieties of plants and animals, and a much wider range of foods. This supports much greater biological and genetic diversity than global agro-industrial food systems.

Finally, human-wildlife conflict is also an issue that affects many Indigenous Peoples. Over millennia, many Indigenous Peoples have developed ways of living harmoniously alongside wildlife within their territories, which helps to maintain biodiversity in the area and also reduces their conflict with wild animals. Such approaches are often deeply rooted in their cultures and linked with **customary sustainable use** practices.

However, these traditional approaches can often be upset by changes that come from outsiders. For example, external economic activities that disturb wildlife habitats – often carried out without free, prior and informed consent - can cause wildlife to move closer to Indigenous communities, leading to an increase in incidents of human-wildlife conflict. For example, in a territory where elephants usually keep their distance from Indigenous Peoples’ dwellings, an increase in forestry activities in the deep forest could mean elephants move towards Indigenous communities, damaging homes and crops.

Similarly, external laws and policies can sometimes undermine how Indigenous Peoples traditionally manage conflict with wildlife. For example, a prohibition on hunting that stops customary sustainable hunting by Indigenous Peoples may undermine local approaches to minimising human-wildlife conflict.

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OFFICIAL CBD TARGET TEXT

Ensure urgent management actions to halt human induced extinction of known threatened species and for the recovery and conservation of species, in particular threatened species, to significantly reduce extinction risk, as well as to maintain and restore the genetic diversity within and between populations of native, wild and domesticated species to maintain their adaptive potential, including through in situ and ex situ conservation and sustainable management practices, and effectively manage human-wildlife interactions to minimize human-wildlife conflict for coexistence.