

By George Gay

Sir David Attenborough, renowned nature documentarian, has produced his “witness statement” regarding human life on earth, his forecast for the future, and his prescription for avoiding it.

When man first landed on the moon, in 1969, the human population on earth was less than half of what it is today. Nature’s wilderness covered more than twice as much of the earth’s surface as it does today. Now, humans, and the animals that we raise for food, account for 96% of the mass of all the animals inhabiting earth.

If we remain on our current path, we face continued temperature increases, extreme weather events, drought, loss of food sources and mass extinction.

The answer is simple: humans must reduce our impact by making sure that everything we do, we can do forever. In the next few decades, we must do something unprecedented—achieve a sustainable existence on earth.

#### **David Attenborough lays out 7 actions to save the world:**

1. **Put people and planet before profit.** “Restoring biodiversity on Earth is the only way out of the crisis we have created.” That means ‘rewilding’ the world, re-establishing the balance between humans and nature.
2. **Replace carbon-based energy with renewable sources.** Wind, solar, tide and geothermal energy sources can replace a substantial amount of the energy currently created by burning oil, gas, and coal.
3. **Embrace a sustainable lifestyle.** We must work in balance with the natural world. We must halt and reverse the conversion of wild spaces to farmland, plantations, and other developments. We must end our overuse of fertilizers. We must reduce our use of fresh water. We must reverse climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We must dramatically reduce the amount of non-degradable plastic which ends up in our oceans.
4. **Create no-fishing zones in the ocean.** The worldwide fishing industry is causing the most damage to the ocean and to its food stocks. Based on early efforts, it appears that a global effort to create a network of no-fishing zones throughout coastal waters where fish can grow older and produce more offspring would actually increase the number of fish available in neighboring waters.
5. **Farm smarter and eat less meat.** Humans must learn how to get more food from less land. “If we are to farm less land, we must eat much less meat, especially red meat, and especially beef.” When including the grain to feed cows, the beef industry consumes 60 percent of our farmland. With more and more vegetable-based protein alternatives, humankind can feed itself on just half the land we currently farm.



6. **Protect and replenish our forests.** End deforestation. Now. Limit palm oil to already deforested areas. Planting more trees is among the best ways to pull carbon out of the atmosphere.
7. **Raise people out of poverty to slow population growth.** When communities emerge from poverty, provide reasonable health care, and educate their children, especially girls, population stabilizes.

At First Affirmative, we recognize that all of the prescriptions above can be emphasized and leveraged by personal and institutional financial decisions: how we spend, lend and invest our money. It is now more possible than ever to convert personal impact desires into direct portfolio construction decisions which direct money away from the damaging behaviors identified above and toward the prescribed solutions. We look forward to sharing our new, enhanced capabilities with our advisors and clients.

“David Attenborough: A Life on Our Planet” is available on Netflix. I recommend that you watch it. In the meantime, take five minutes here:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=3909438982418476>

(Sir David Attenborough is an English broadcaster and natural historian. He is best known for writing and presenting, in conjunction with the BBC Natural History Unit, natural history documentaries focused on animal and plant life on earth.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David\\_Attenborough](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Attenborough) )



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