

What Is the Threat?

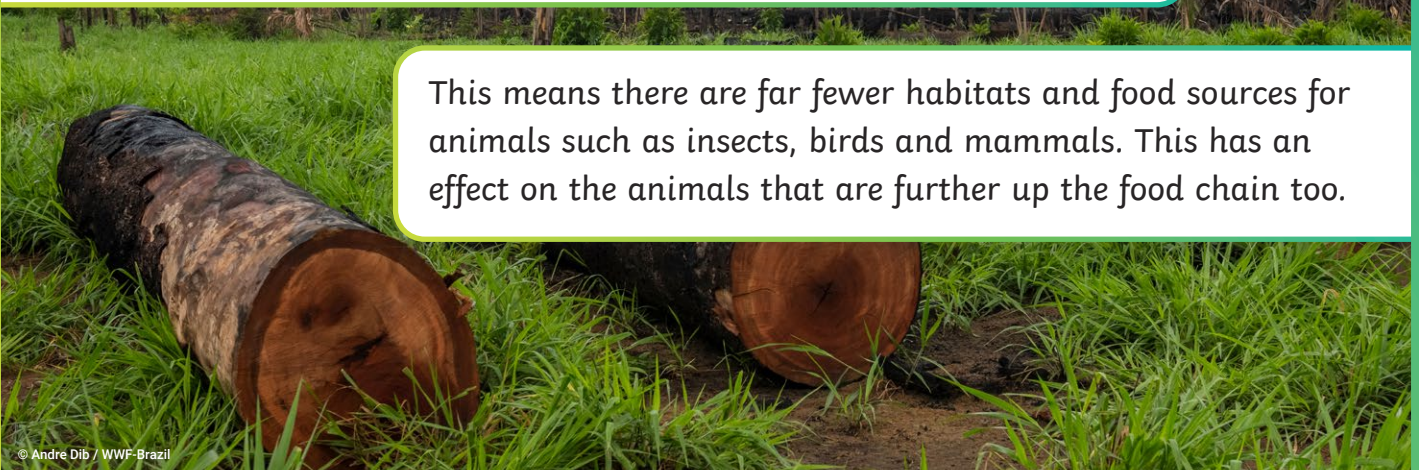
The demand for food to meet the needs of the world's growing population is creating a worrying problem for our delicate planet. Huge amounts of land are used for livestock and crop production, with pesticides causing an additional issue. Pollution and overfishing are causing damage to our oceans and marine life. Climate change is having a massive impact on the sustainability of a wide range of species. Every stage of the food chain is likely to be affected in one way or another.

Read through each of the information cards and then decide which of the environmental threats might affect the food chains you have made.

twinkl.com

What Is the Threat?

Much of the land on Earth is cleared to make way for agricultural use (farming): forests, hedgerows and meadows disappear as a result of this.



This means there are far fewer habitats and food sources for animals such as insects, birds and mammals. This has an effect on the animals that are further up the food chain too.

© Andre Dib / WWF-Brazil

twinkl.com

What Is the Threat?

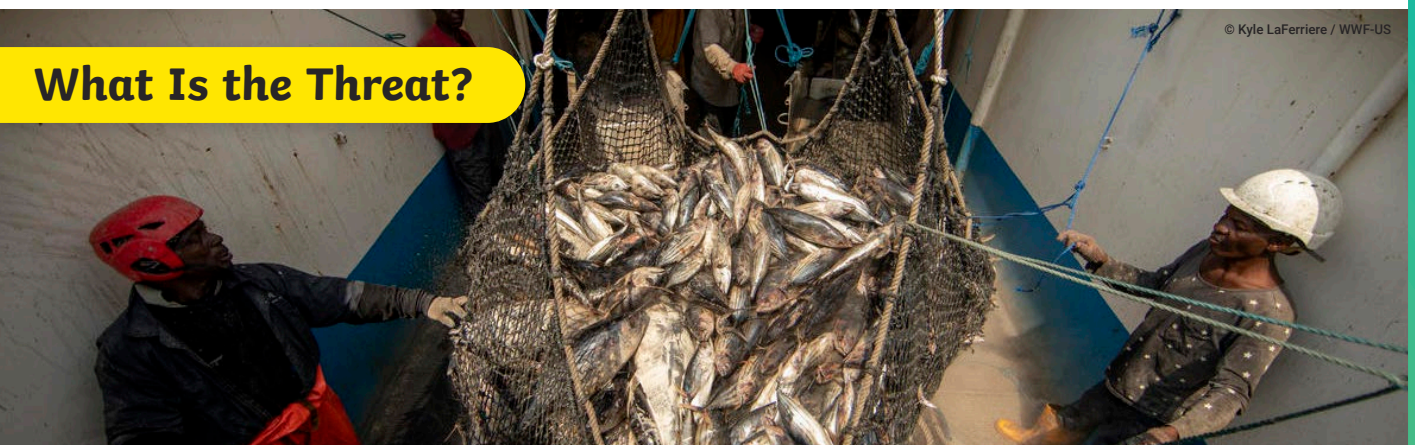
Climate change (the long-term warming up of our planet) poses a huge threat to a range of the world's species. Melting polar ice caps, longer periods of drought, increased flooding and warmer seasons could all affect the habitats, food sources and reproduction rates of a large proportion of the Earth's living things. This includes Arctic and Antarctic creatures, migrating birds, hibernating animals, desert and tropical species, among many others.



© Wim van Passel / WWF

twinkl.com

What Is the Threat?



© Kyle LaFerriere / WWF-US

The demand for fish as a healthy source of protein is increasing globally and many people rely on fishing as their source of income. Overfishing, however, when different species of fish are caught more quickly than they can reproduce naturally, can affect whole ecosystems and create a lack of food for a range of other marine life. Many fish are also caught accidentally and are discarded when a fishing vessel is trying to catch a particular species of fish. Sourcing fish more sustainably is one way to ensure sufficient species remain and to avoid disrupting different food chains.

twinkl.com

What Is the Threat?

Plastic pollution, particularly in the oceans, is having a huge impact on marine wildlife. Microplastics are so minute they are consumed by some of the oceans' smallest living things, such as plankton and krill, while other sea creatures are consuming or becoming harmed by larger plastics. These animals are important food sources for other ocean dwellers and so these plastics are passed on along a variety of food chains, having a long-lasting impact.



© naturepl.com / Alex Mustard / WWF

twinkl.com

What Is the Threat?

Agricultural pesticides, used to control pests and boost crop production, alongside commonly used garden pest control, such as slug pellets, contain ingredients that are harmful to a wide range of species. Sometimes, these are consumed directly, for example slug predators eating slug pellets or pollinating insects ingesting the pesticides used on crops. They may also be consumed indirectly by consumers higher up the food chain. In addition, many of these pesticides are washed into streams and rivers by rainwater, where they can directly harm water dwellers and even contaminate human drinking water.



© Rob Webster / WWF

twinkl.com