

**Humans are a plague on the Earth that need to be controlled by limiting population growth, according to *Sir David Attenborough***



*By Louise Gray, Environment Correspondent*

The television presenter said that humans are threatening their own existence and that of other species by using up the world's resources.

He said the only way to save the planet from famine and species extinction is to limit human population growth. "We are a plague on the Earth. It's coming home to roost over the next 50 years or so. It's not just climate change; it's sheer space, places to grow food for this enormous horde. Either we limit our population growth, or the natural world will do it for us, and the natural world is doing it for us right now," he told the Radio Times.

Sir David, who is a patron of the Population Matters, has spoken out before about the "frightening explosion in human numbers" and the need for investment in sex education and other voluntary means of limiting population in developing countries.

"We keep putting on programmes about famine in Ethiopia; that's what's happening. Too many people there. They can't support themselves and it's not an inhuman thing to say. It's the case. Until humanity manages to sort itself out and get a coordinated view about the planet it's going to get worse and worse."

*June 1, 2017*

**We're our own worst enemy.**

Humans rather than a giant meteor or a super volcano will be behind Earth's next mass extinction, researchers predict in a special edition of the *Journal Nature* published Thursday.

Future population growth along with economic development will be humanity's fatal flaws, bringing about "unprecedented levels of extinction risk."

Mammals, birds and amphibians are getting wiped out at a rate comparable to the previous five mass extinctions except this time, humans are

the driving force, not “cataclysmic forces,” the Independent reported, citing researchers.

Human population growth has increased by 130 percent in the last 50 years, putting incredible pressure on the natural world, according to the site.

“The ever-increasing and unprecedented extent and impact of human activities on land and in the oceans over the past few centuries have dramatically reduced global biodiversity,” a team of international scientists wrote in one of the papers.

“There is overwhelming evidence that habitat loss and fragmentation, over-exploitation of biological resources, pollution, species invasions and climate change have increased rates of global species extinctions to levels that are much higher than those observed in the fossil record.”

The loss of biodiversity will significantly impact the benefits people derive from nature, such as natural resources, the scientists warned.

The scientists said “urgent” action is needed to ensure natural habitats will be protected. If strict conservation policies are enforced, Earth can be saved before it’s too late, the researchers said.

“Earth is capable of providing healthy diets for 10 billion people in 2060 and preserving viable habitats for the vast majority of its remaining species,” the scientists wrote.

“The benefits for biodiversity and humanity of pursuing these goals are great, and with forethought and timely action, these goals can be achieved.

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**Sir David**, who is soon to present a programme on human beings, said population control was a “huge area of concern”, adding the world was “heading for disaster unless we do something”. He warned if humans do not act soon, the “natural world will do something”, as he argues famine in Ethiopia is about “too many people for too little piece of land”.

He suggested humans are “blinding ourselves” to the problem, claiming: “We say, get the United Nations to send them bags of flour. That’s barmy.”

In an interview with the Telegraph, ahead of new programme David Attenborough’s *Rise of Animals*, he admitted the issues had “huge sensitivities” but insisted it was important to “just keep on about it”.

When asked about comments he made on population control earlier this year, when he said human beings were a “plague on the Earth, Sir David agreed they could be considered “blindingly obvious” but claimed nobody else had made the point publicly.

*By Hannah Furness 7:00AM BST*

“Instead of controlling the environment  
for the benefit of the population  
Perhaps it is time we control the population

for the survival of the environment”  
*David Attenborough*