

# We are killing species at 1000 times the natural rate

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HUMANS are now driving species to extinction at around 1000 times the natural rate.

[Stuart Pimm](#) at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, and his colleagues were updating [their 1995 research](#) that concluded we were killing off species at 100 to 1000 times the natural rate. That study underestimated the rate of current species loss, and overstated the natural rate over the past 10 to 20 million years.

For the most part, the new higher estimate is not due to an acceleration in extinctions since 1995 but to a more sophisticated analysis. One exception is an increase in threats to amphibians, partly because the [killer chytrid fungus](#) has spread around the world (*Science*, [doi.org/szx](https://doi.org/szx)).