

# Stop!

Life in  
**DANGER**

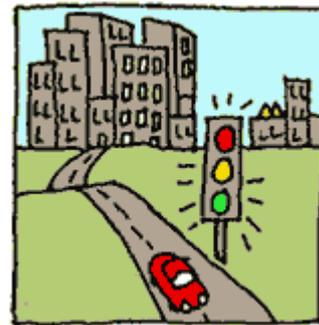


## Apocalypse soon: the beginning of the end?

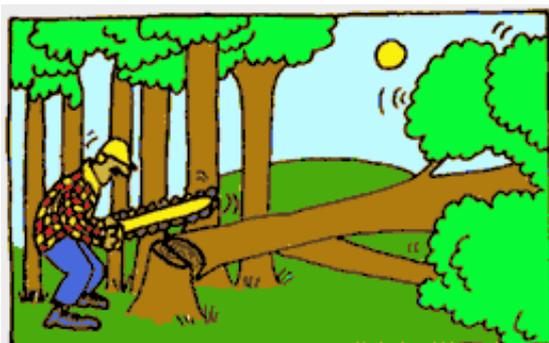
Are people really threatening life on the planet? What's the evidence?

One good way to find out what's going on is to look at 'indicators' -- you know, rather like traffic lights.

Green means clear, go-ahead; amber means caution, watch out; and red means stop! I'd say these traffic light indicators are on red. Let's look at some examples of indicators.

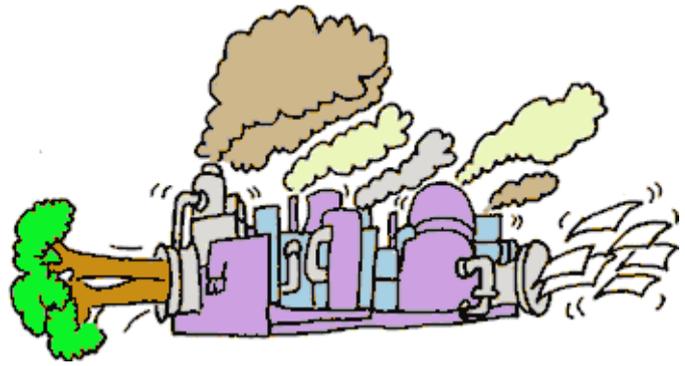


**Forests** - The most famous forests in the world are those of the Amazon in South America, but there many others. Some are in the tropics (tropical rainforest) but most are in Russia and Canada (boreal forest). It is the tropical rainforests which are particularly rich in different types of plants and creatures.



And people are cutting and burning these forests more and more both for their timber and to make new ranch land for raising yet more animals for

rich people to eat. The boreal forests are going fast too, mostly for making paper for newspapers, magazines and offices. But what's really scary is that **each year an area of forest gets cut or burned down.**



People have already cut down half the world's forests. The Europeans have cut down almost three-quarters of theirs.

Remember, it's not just the trees that are lost but all the animals whose home it was like monkeys, **tigers** or **parrots**.



**Lakes, rivers and wetlands** - These are home to many species like birds, frogs and fish. Yet in the last 30 years, these creatures have declined by almost half.



Particularly worrisome are the frogs and other amphibians. Nobody knows for sure why these creatures are dying so fast but it

seems likely that chemical pollution (particularly certain types of pesticide) and global warming are at least partly responsible.



**The seas and oceans** - As you know, the sea is home to many animals

including fish and mammals like seals and whales and dolphins. And, most importantly it's home to many types of seabirds including penguins many seabirds are **in the trouble**. Their numbers have dwindled by over a third in under 30 years.

Part of the reason wildlife in the seas is having problems is that **people are taking much more than their fair share of fish**. And it's not as though people even eat all the fish they catch. Lots of the fish are just ground up to make fertilisers or food (fish meal) for other animals which people then eat.



The world's fishing grounds, once home to a wonderful mix of different creatures, are dying as powerful ships with big trawling nets and sonar systems to spot fish shoals suck up millions of tons of fish, including young ones which

aren't even old enough to breed and make more fish. Some of countries had the world's biggest fishing industry. That collapsed because of over-fishing.

Now, people - never learning lessons and always wanting to make more money - have started fishing in the Antarctic Ocean and are even sweeping up the krill which all the birds like me, whales and seals depend on as well as the fish themselves. And some countries are still killing whales.



**Coral reefs** - Have you ever seen a coral reef? These are home to myriads of plants and animals rather like the tropical rainforests on land. They are very beautiful too. But they too are in big trouble and many are dying because of what is called bleaching.

