



MARK CARWARDINE

WILD THOUGHTS

We're doomed. At least, that's my conclusion after following the first week of 'progress' at the UN Biodiversity Summit in Nagoya, Japan, where environment ministers from 193 countries are discussing the world's nature crisis.

They're throwing around the usual banalities and sound bites, and then they'll go home and do absolutely nothing. I know this because they do exactly the same at every summit. It's business as usual. The only difference is that, each time they meet, the world is a poorer place and there is significantly less to pretend to protect.

The world's governments may pledge to achieve a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss, but they do nothing of the sort. *Evolution Lost*, a report produced by the Zoological Society of London, IUCN, WWF and the Species Survival Commission, and launched in Nagoya, makes it quite clear that the situation is worse now than ever before.

The reason is simple: a complete and utter lack of political will.

A team of UN-sponsored economists has calculated that the loss of biodiversity is costing the human race between \$2 and \$5 trillion a year – thus helping to define its importance in a new way – yet all those useless environment ministers still put petty national interests first.

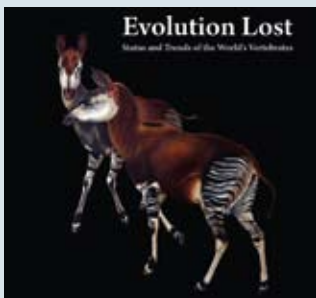
They get away with it because the so-called targets that they are hotly debating are nothing more than 'aspirations

for achievement'. Most of their promises and assurances are completely meaningless, depressing drivel.

Everyone got excited when Japan pledged \$2 billion funding over three years – part of which will be geared towards implementing the latest hot-aired biodiversity plan in developing countries. To put that into perspective, it's 10 per cent of the value of the compensation fund BP had to set aside in response to the Gulf of Mexico oil spill. It doesn't even register on the scale of what is actually needed.

I think it's already too late to reverse the precipitous decline of animals and plants. The question now is: do we have any hope of slowing it down?

Mark Carwardine is a zoologist, photographer and tv presenter.



The okapi isn't 'lost' yet, but 20 per cent of vertebrates are threatened.

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