

Poll: Most Americans Believe Human Population Growth Threatens Species, Climate

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Ever since Stanford professor Paul Ehrlich and his wife Ann Ehrlich (who was uncredited) published *The Population Bomb* in 1968, it's been a controversial, if taboo question: Should we curtail population growth in order to save both humankind and Planet Earth? For that matter, do we even need to?

While some of the book's premises haven't stood the test of time, the essence of the Ehrlichs' argument seems to be gaining acceptance 45 years later, and is increasingly relevant on today's 7-billion-person planet.

To wit: Poll results released today by the environmental nonprofit Center for Biological Diversity suggest that more than half and as many as two-thirds of Americans are aware of the direct link between human-population growth and adverse impacts to the planet. The national poll of 657 registered voters was commissioned by CBD and conducted by Public

Policy Polling on February 22-24.

Among its findings:

— 64 percent of respondents said that, with the human population expected to hit 10 billion by 2050, wildlife will be adversely affected.

— 61 percent said they are already concerned about the rate that wildlife are disappearing.

— 60 percent said they “strongly agreed” or “somewhat agreed” that human population growth is driving animal species to extinction.

— 60 percent said our society has a “moral responsibility” to address wildlife extinctions in the face of a growing population.

— 59 percent said they “strongly agreed” or “somewhat agreed” that addressing the effects of human population growth is “an important environmental issue.”

— 57 percent believe human population growth is “significantly impacting the disappearance of wildlife.”

— 57 percent said they “strongly agreed” or “somewhat agreed” that population growth is making climate change worse.

— 54 percent said stabilizing population growth will help protect the environment.

“It’s now more clear than ever that Americans are concerned about the toll that human population growth is having on wildlife and our planet,” said Jerry Karnas, population campaign director at the Center, in the release. “It’s heartening to see that most Americans understand these connections and don’t want to see them ignored.”