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Invite a Polar Bear Into Your Bed This NYE



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Polar bears are in trouble. Climate change driven by runaway human population growth and reckless overconsumption is melting the sea ice they need to survive, leading to heart-breaking accounts of drowning bears and starving cubs. It's not just polar bears -- species around the world are feeling the pressure of climate change, habitat loss and pollution.

Hang in there, polar bears. This holiday season, condoms are coming to the rescue.

I'm not talking about a hypothetical condom -- some proverbial prophylactic to protect wildlife from the threats of our society. I mean literal condoms. You may (rightfully) be wondering how one puts a condom on a polar bear or why we'd want endangered species to use

contraception. These condoms are for the one species the planet doesn't need more of: Us.

I know this may seem like an awkward request, but I'm asking you to bring endangered species into your bedroom. There are more than 7 billion people on the planet, and our population is still growing. That's why the Center for Biological Diversity is giving away 25,000 free Endangered Species Condoms this holiday season with colorful wildlife-themed packaging and slogans like "Wrap with care... save the polar bear."

This is a conversation that needs to happen. Animals and plants are disappearing at 1,000 to 10,000 times the natural rate and scientists agree it's our fault. Humans are gobbling up

land and water, polluting habitat and spouting climate-changing emissions. Our sheer numbers and unsustainable consumption habits aren't leaving much room for other species.

This isn't someone else's problem: Not only is the U.S. a world leader in emissions, but nearly half of all pregnancies in this country are unplanned and we have a higher fertility rate than any other industrialized nation. We can all do our part by making more sustainable choices and supporting universal access to education and birth control so everyone can decide for themselves when and how many children to have.

By New Year's Eve, the Center will reach the milestone of having given away 500,000 Endangered Species Condoms since 2009. Now it's your turn. Hundreds of volunteers in all 50 states will be handing out free Endangered Species Condoms over the holidays.

If you're lucky, maybe you'll find a polar bear in your stocking. If not, you can still do your part to keep the conversation going about the link between rampant human population growth and the species extinction crisis.

Check out the Endangered Species Condoms website, where you can find more information about the project, including talking points and how to sign up for updates. You can also join me in taking the New Year's pledge for a more sustainable, wildlife-friendly 2014.

Half a million condoms won't solve all the planet's -- or polar bear's -- problems. But it's a start.