

Condom campaign promotes safe sex for environment's sake



A sample image from this year's endangered species condom campaign, which is designed to spark conversation about the impact of human population growth on the natural world. Courtesy of the Center for Biological Diversity

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Before you, um, "ring in the new year" with your significant other or that person you just met on the Strip, the Center for Biological Diversity wants you to take a moment to remember the plight of the polar bear.

For the sixth straight year, the environmental group is distributing tens of thousands of endangered species

condoms to spark conversation about the impact of human population growth on the natural world.

According to the Tucson, Ariz.-based group, more babies are conceived between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day than any other time of year.

"The reality is that as human population grows, we're crowding wildlife into extinction, and if we don't start addressing this soon it will be too late for many endangered species," said Leigh Moyer, the center's population organizer. "While it may make family dinner conversation a little awkward, polar bears, sea otters and other wildlife will thank you for making their future a part of your holiday celebrations."

This year's campaign includes 40,000 condoms with slogans on the packaging such as: "Wrap with care, save the polar bear," "Can't refrain? Remember the whooping crane," "Before it gets any hotter, remember the sea otter," and "Fumbling in the dark? Think of the monarch."

Moyer said volunteers plan to hand out roughly 850 of the condoms in Nevada, where the environmental group is active and involved in a number of lawsuits over threatened species and water resource development.

The center has given away more than 600,000 endangered species condoms since 2009.

Moyer said “there were definitely questions” within the organization when the campaign was first launched. “But once we started brainstorming over the funny slogans and the species, people really got into the idea,” she said. “In fact, the condoms made it easier for people to feel comfortable venturing into the sometimes controversial area of population advocacy.”

Judging by the center’s own figures, handing out 40,000 condoms isn’t likely to make a dent. According to Moyer and company, more than 227,000 people are added to the global population every day. Meanwhile, many scientists warn that the planet is in the midst of its sixth mass wildlife extinction — one not caused by a volcano or a meteor strike but by human activity.

The center’s population and sustainability program promotes a range of solutions, including universal access to birth control and family planning, education and empowerment of women and girls.

Moyer said people can sign up online to, ah, participate in the campaign at www.endangeredspeciescondoms.com, while supplies last.