

CREATION CARE GREEN TIPS - MARCH 2021

1. In January 2021 the Basel Convention, a group of 187 countries that governs hazardous waste, unanimously passed an agreement that would **severely limit the export of plastic waste** to member countries, many of which **don't have the infrastructure to handle it**. While the U.S. is one of the few countries not part of the Convention, the almost **1.5 billion pounds of plastic waste we used to export yearly is now building up in U.S. warehouses**. According to research from the Weizmann Institute of Science (Rehovot, Israel), the **total weight of the world's plastic is 9G (gigatons), twice the total weight of the world's animals at 4.5G**. With plastic production predicted to **double in 15 years**, we should encourage our government to **JOIN THE BASEL CONVENTION**, whose overarching objective is to **protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of hazardous wastes**.
2. According to the Nature Conservancy, **plastics are a major contributor to both climate change and direct environmental degradation**. More than **90% of the plastics produced globally is not recycled**, breaking down in the environment into such fine particles that plastic is now discovered in **human food and beverages, and even inside human bodies**. Since plastics are made from a byproduct of **fracked natural gas and other petroleum products**, the resulting **carbon dioxide and methane in their production** could reach the equivalent of **295 new 500-megawatt coal plants by 2030**, according to estimates by the Center for International Environmental Law. **ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE: Reduce, Reuse and Do Without** to reduce demand and markets for plastic; **Ask Congress to support** the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act, which would **cut back on plastic production and put a moratorium on petrochemical plant expansions**.
3. In just 20 years Minnesota's state bee, the **rusty patched bumblebee, has disappeared from 99% of its native range** in the fields, forests and grasslands of 28 states. According to The Natural Resources Defense Council, the Center for Biological Diversity, and the Friends of Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas, the die-off has been caused by **habitat loss, climate change, and pesticides such as neonicotinoids (neonics)** that harm the immune systems of all pollinators. **High quality habitat with flowering plants free from pesticides** is essential for the rusty patched bumblebee and other beloved pollinators to thrive, so **CONSIDER DEVOTING A PART OF YOUR YARD to native plants, and purchase seeds and plants only from businesses that do not use neonics in their growing process or in the plants they purchase (yes, you can ask them)**.
4. BirdLife International, a global authority on bird conservation, finds that of the **10,999 extant species of birds in the world, 23% (2,487 species) are considered Critically Endangered, Endangered, or Vulnerable** (see full report at birdlife.org). Minnesota birds in the Vulnerable category, indicating significant decline on a global scale, are **lesser prairie chicken, chimney swift, and evening grosbeak**. The status of various species influences conservation actions not only by governments, but by independent organizations such as the Audubon Society or the Nature Conservancy. **Climate change is one factor in status determination, but the elimination of habitat due to never-ending human development is another**. According to research from the Weizmann Institute of Science (Rehovot, Israel), the **ratio of the mass of human-made objects to that of all living matter on Earth in 1900 was 3:100, while the ratio of the mass of human-made objects to that of all living matter on Earth in 2020 is 1:1. By 2040, the ratio is estimated to be 2:1**.