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ASSESSING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE

Since 24 February 2022, the war in Ukraine has caused untold human suffering. It has also brought unprecedented and long-lasting challenges to the environment. With extreme violence still ongoing, it is too early for a comprehensive assessment of the environmental damage, yet there are already worrying indications of the nature and scope of the damage that is growing with each day of the war.

The environmental costs of the war include direct impacts on habitats and species; but also indirect ones in terms of pollution of air, land, and water, or diverted resources.

Already before the war, Ukraine – like other countries – was facing significant environmental challenges, including crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. The country has already warmed by almost 1.5°C over the last 30 years, and the increase in annual mean temperatures [could reach 3°C](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/binaries/content/assets/metofficegovuk/pdf/services/government/met-office_climate-change-impacts-for-ukraine_report_08dec2021_english.pdf) by the middle of the century. The impacts of these changes are increasingly evident, for example in decreased harvest yields.

The war is not only impacting an already stressed natural environment but also preventing efforts to improve the situation. Activities and investments to restore habitats, conserve species, improve protected area management as well as mitigate and adapt to climate change have been disrupted.