

# QUAKER CONCERN OVER POPULATION

## NEWSLETTER 2

1 NOVEMBER 2017

### Quaker Concern Over Population, QCOP, at Warwick YMG

50 Quakers engaged fully in the talk on global population issues given by Kendal Friend, Ann le Mare at YMG. She focussed particularly on why people have large families, and on the different methods that countries have used to reduced their birth-rates to the replacement level of around 2 per family.

We heard of cheerful Buddhist Thailand, economic incentives in Singapore and the relatively poor Vietnam with a collectivist mindset. The world's greenest country, Costa Rica, is down to 1.8 children per family. With employment and war widowhood making women more independent, plus aid focussed on women, rural, poor, overcrowded Bangladesh is at 2. The very conservative Kerala in India, a state of relatively

low economic growth not based on mass consumption, but with good education, has addressed women's issues from the start. Its birthrate is 1.7.

So what's the problem? It's where there is no security of family planning supplies, no tradition of empowered women and no universal education. Africa has the 15 countries with the highest birth rate and the poorest, such as Niger, Sudan, and Nigeria. They also have the longest running civil wars. Economic development is their preferred strategy to addressing poverty, rather than equality and education for women which invariably reduces the size of families.

The other issue is donor insecurity directed to reproductive health. With the reinstatement and expansion of the Mexico City Policy, the biggest donor has recently made it much harder to fund

clinics.

## Welcome to the Anthropocene!

The UK charity 'Population Matters' has recently launched a major project called the "Welcome to the Anthropocene campaign". This aims to raise awareness that the human impact on the Earth is so deep and damaging that scientists are calling for our era to be called the Anthropocene – 'the age of humans'. In fact, many scientists believe we humans are causing the sixth mass extinction – the last being the end of the dinosaurs. Currently, too few people know about the danger the natural world is in and Population Matters is calling on organisations which educate the public about the natural world to face the facts and give people information about THEM. Reproduced ON THE NEXT PAGES....'Reproduced overleaf is a leaflet summarising the Campaign. More information is available at: <https://www.populationmatters.org/about/campaigns-and-projects/welcome-to-the-anthropocene>.

# WELCOME TO THE ANTHROPOCENE



**10,000  
YEARS AGO**

99% Wild Animals

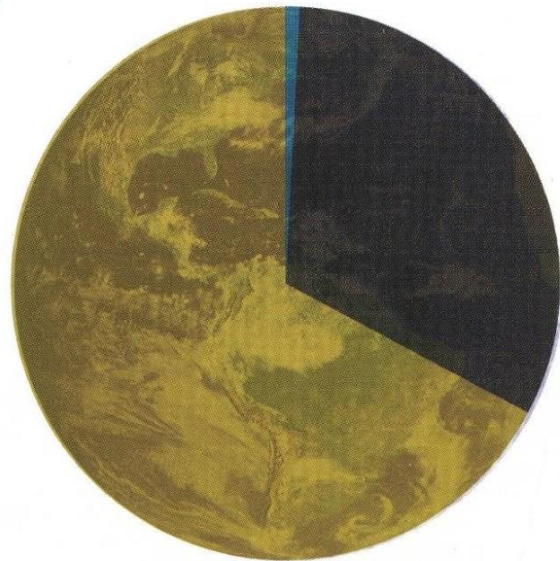
1% Humans

**TODAY**

1% Wild Animals

32% Humans

67% Livestock



population  
matters

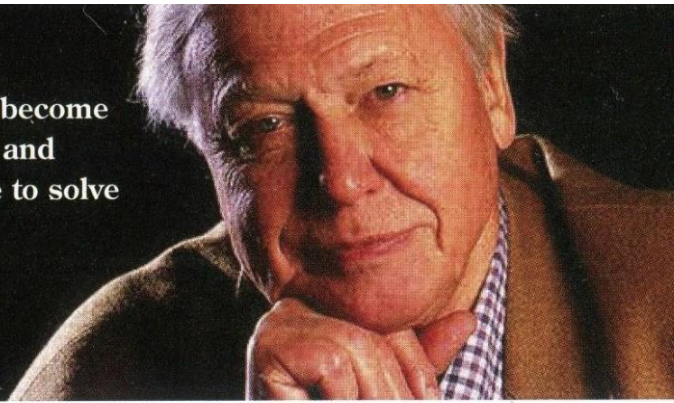
Life has existed on Earth for more than three billion years. In a tiny fraction of that time, wild animals have gone from 99% of the weight of all vertebrate animals on land to just over 1%.

**Today, the force with the greatest effect on our planet is us. The pressure of 7.6 billion people is squeezing the life out of our planet, threatening our children's future.**



**"All our environmental problems become easier to solve with fewer people, and harder and ultimately impossible to solve with ever more people."**

Sir David Attenborough,  
Population Matters patron



## Nature is on the run

- Species are becoming extinct at least 100 times faster than they would without human impacts.
- Populations of wild animals have more than halved since 1970, while the human population has doubled.
- Scientists call what is happening today the 'sixth mass extinction' – the fifth was the end of the dinosaurs.
- Because of industry, agriculture and fossil fuel use, carbon dioxide in the air is at its highest level for millions of years and disruption of other chemical cycles is turning seas and rivers into dead zones.
- 2016 was the hottest year since modern records began. Global warming is already causing glaciers to melt, sea levels to rise, species extinctions and an increase in severe weather events.

## Saving the planet

Two hundred years ago, there were less than a billion people on Earth. Today, there are 7.6bn and our population is still growing. According to the United Nations, that figure could double by the end of the century. So great is our impact that scientists are calling for the renaming of this period in our planet's geological history as the 'Anthropocene' – the age of humans.

We can ease the pressure on our world by demanding less from it. We can all help by buying less, reusing and recycling more, moving towards a plant-based diet and having smaller families. Most of all, we can ensure that the number of people on the planet is not too great for the natural world to bear.

### We can end runaway global population growth by:

- Empowering women worldwide with the freedom to choose their family size - through education, social change and economic development
- Giving people the help they need to lift themselves out of poverty
- Encouraging people to have smaller families wherever they have the choice to
- Ensuring everyone can access and use modern family planning

**We can change the world for the better.**



f PopulationMatters  
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Charity no: 1114109



WELCOME TO THE  
**ANTHROPOCENE**

## Upcoming Events

### QCOP at Woodbrooke - 24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> November

*'Costing not less than Everything: The Swarthmore Lecture Revisited'*. As part of the course QCOP will lead a session on the issue of population. For information go to <http://qcop.org.uk/> and <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/courses.php?action=course&id=11454>.

### QCOP at Gloucester Quaker Meeting House Greyfriars, Southgate St, Gloucester GL11TS on - 3 February 2018

Meet concerned Friends to discuss global population issues. This structured meeting aims to:

- allow QCOP members and others to discuss a Quaker view on global population issues.
- consider "Why concern about population issues is a necessary response to the Canterbury Commitment (Minute 36)", ie its place in the sustainability debate. We need this debate for dialogue with QPSW and MfS.

1–2pm bring packed lunch and meet like-minded others. Tea, coffee and satsumas provided. 2–4pm Discussion facilitated by a QCOP member.

Only 10 minutes from Gloucester Station. Enquiries to Cherry Foster, [the\\_fosters@btinternet.com](mailto:the_fosters@btinternet.com)

### QCOP Groups Fair Stall Yearly Meeting Gathering- Warwick University - August 2017



Two stalwarts of the QCOP steering group, Cherry Foster and Roger Plenty were unable to be present at the event, but they had written three information

sheets to be available to all enquirers.

'Quakers look at Population and Conflict'

'Quakers look at Population and Wildlife'

'Quakers look at Population and Resources'.

The green QCOP banner and sheets of relevant quotes and photos of people such as David Attenborough, Helen Mirren, Chris Packham arrested the attention of passers-by. Jonathan, Norman and June added a selection of QCOP and Population Matters posters and leaflets and talked with Friends visiting the stall. Most comments were supportive but they varied from 'Overpopulation is the major contributor to climate change' to 'any shortage of resources is due to inadequate distribution'. There was much interest in the information sheets (about 150 taken away) as well as the other items. Twenty Friends joined QCOP and we also had kind donations for which we are grateful.

Attending the Groups Fair was most useful in getting over our concern to more Friends and we wish to thank YMG for allowing us to participate

### QCOP – How we operate

QCOP grew out of the Canterbury Commitment and was established after the successful lecture that we held at Yearly Meeting in Bath in 2014. We have around 80 supporters, mainly from Friends in Britain but also Europe and the USA.

### Annual voluntary donations.

QCOP is growing and needs money for publicity materials, website etc. We have no membership fee so ask for an annual voluntary donation of £5£20 per supporter. If you can, please send a cheque made out to QCOP to: Cherry Foster, 334 Westward Road, Ebley, Stroud, GL5 4TU.

### Committee

Jonathan Riddell – Convenor (Alton Meeting)

Cherry Foster – Secretary /Treasurer

(Nailsworth Meeting)

Roger Plenty (Nailsworth Meeting)

Nick Chetwood (Brigflatts Meeting - Cumbria)

June New (Jesus Lane Meeting - Cambridge)

Norman Marsh- Membership

<http://qcop.org.uk/>