

BEST PRACTICES FOR SUSTAINABLE SOURCING FOR BIODIVERSITY, LIVELIHOODS, AND CLIMATE

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE WILDLIFE FRIENDLY®?

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

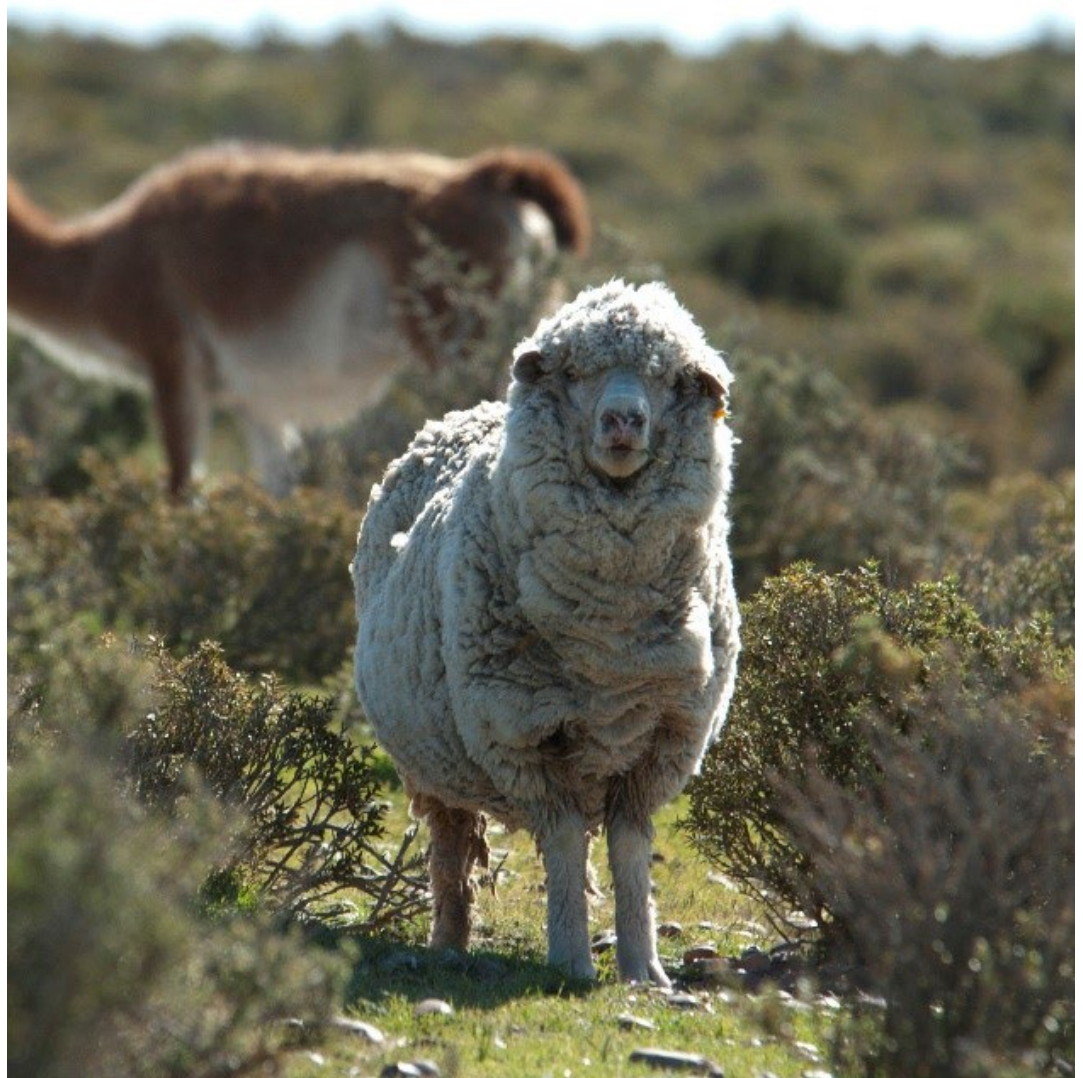


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THE
**FASHION
PACT**



CI-GEF Project Agency



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1. INTRODUCTION

This guidance document was developed as part of the **Transforming the Fashion Sector with Nature** project, a two-year initiative funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Conservation International, a GEF Agency, is partnering with The Fashion Pact to work together in executing this project. By using world-class science, this project aims to better understand and mitigate the fashion industry's impact on biodiversity.

The Author: Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network (WFEN) is a non-profit organization founded in 2007 to offer global biodiversity certification programs that focus on the conservation of endangered and threatened wildlife species and their habitat.

WFEN's mission is to protect wildlife in wild places and on agricultural lands by certifying enterprises that assure people and nature coexist and thrive. WFEN has created a global network of community conservationists, businesses, artisans, farmers, ranchers and herders, harvesters, and indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs), who are joining efforts to conserve wildlife while contributing to the economic vitality of local community livelihoods for the coexistence of wildlife and people.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This guidance document details how the Certified Wildlife Friendly™ program can support sustainable sourcing strategies of The Fashion Pact members, especially with regard to aligning the fashion industry's efforts with wildlife conservation. This document can be used by fashion and apparel companies to gain an understanding of what it means to be Wildlife Friendly® and how primary products can become Certified Wildlife Friendly™.

The fashion industry is highly dependent on natural resources that include water, plant-based, raw materials like cotton, as well as wildlife for wool and luxury fibers. There has been growing pressure on the industry to demonstrate how it will reduce the negative impact it has on the natural world. Measures that provide wildlife safety, water conservation, waste management, and a reduction in pollution are critical in the fashion industry as many fashion brands seek best practices and transition to environmentally-friendly fashion. Transforming tier 4 of supply chains to Certified Wildlife Friendly™ production practices assist the fashion industry to mitigate its impact on wildlife at source. This guidance document provides key indicators for sustainable sourcing options that will assist with biodiversity conservation and provide positive outcomes for wildlife.

3. THE WILDLIFE FRIENDLY® PROGRAM

Over the years of working with such a diverse range of sectors and stakeholders, the Wildlife Friendly® program has:

- Enabled enterprises to contribute directly and indirectly to *in situ* conservation of key endangered wildlife species.
- Led to the sustainability transition through the application of best practices for wildlife conservation for businesses and enterprises.
- Enforced other efforts that support the livelihoods of local communities within the Certified Wildlife Friendly™ network, enabling a robust link between people, planet, and profit.

3.1. THE BIODIVERSITY CRISIS AND WHY WILDLIFE FRIENDLY® IS NEEDED

Biodiversity can be broadly defined as the variety of all life forms on earth. [The Living Planet Report 2022](#), published by the [World Wildlife Fund](#), notes that wildlife populations have plummeted by 69% since 1970, with an estimated one million species at risk of extinction.

3.2. DRIVERS OF BIODIVERSITY DECLINE

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) identified five key drivers of biodiversity loss, of which the following three are relevant to the fashion industry's impact on the environment:

- a) Deforestation, conversion of natural ecosystems, invasive species, and overexploitation of plants and animals (e.g., harvesting, logging, hunting): this is leading to wildlife habitat loss and causing wildlife to move to human settlements in search of shelter, food, and water.
- b) Climate change (e.g., emissions from deforestation and fiber production): rising temperatures are lowering many species' survival rates due to changes that have affected access to food and natural water sources for wildlife (e.g., streams, rivers, etc.). This has also led to an increase in wildfires that are diminishing the habitat and environment for wildlife.
- c) Pollution (e.g., chemically-intense crop and livestock production, water pollution): exposing toxic elements that dissolve in water and air is affecting the survival of many wildlife species, such as aquatic animals, and also reducing the fertility of agricultural soils, thus reducing food production.

A number of companies are beginning to take action to mitigate their impact on biodiversity, with over 50% recognizing biodiversity risk as a priority, 80% increasing their use of certified materials (including Certified Wildlife Friendly™ fibers), 15% mapping sourcing locations to biodiversity value, and 8% operating in line with their biodiversity strategies (source: Textile Exchange, 2023).

A [Global Biodiversity Framework \(GBF\)](#) was agreed upon at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP15) in December 2022 in Montreal, Canada. This new Framework emphasizes policies that encourage sustainable use of biodiversity and nature conservation amongst large organizations and businesses. The GBF also includes targets that aim to enhance the adoption of strategies that *reduce* negative effects and *increase* positive effects of businesses across all their value chains; a sustainability transition to sustainable consumption and production is needed to reduce biodiversity loss.

Key targets of the [Global Biodiversity Framework](#) that can be implemented within the value chains of signatories to The Fashion Pact and other fashion/apparel companies are mentioned below. These targets align with the biodiversity conservation components embedded in WFEN's Certified Wildlife Friendly™ Global Guidelines.

Target 1

Ensure that all areas are under participatory, integrated, biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning and/or effective management processes addressing land and sea use change, to bring the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance, including ecosystems of high ecological integrity, close to zero by 2030 while respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities.

Target 4

Ensure urgent management actions, to halt human-induced extinction of known threatened species and for the recovery and conservation of species, in particular threatened species, to significantly reduce extinction risk, as well as to maintain and restore the genetic diversity within and between populations of native, wild, and domesticated species to maintain their adaptive potential, including through in situ and ex-situ conservation and sustainable management practices, and effectively manage human-wildlife interactions to minimize human-wildlife conflict for coexistence.

Target 5

Ensure that the use, harvesting, and trade of wild species is sustainable, safe, and legal, preventing overexploitation, minimizing impacts on non-target species and ecosystems, and reducing the risk of pathogen spill-over, applying the ecosystem approach while respecting and protecting customary sustainable use by indigenous peoples and local communities.

Target 7

Reduce pollution risks and the negative impact of pollution from all sources, by 2030, to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, considering cumulative effects, including reducing excess nutrients lost to the environment by at least half including through more efficient nutrient cycling and use; reducing the overall risk from pesticides and highly hazardous chemicals by at least half including through integrated pest management, based on science, taking into account food security and livelihoods; and also preventing, reducing, and working towards eliminating plastic pollution.

Target 9

Ensure that the management and use of wild species are sustainable, thereby providing social, economic, and environmental benefits for people, especially those in vulnerable situations and those most dependent on biodiversity, including through sustainable biodiversity-based activities, products, and services that enhance biodiversity, and protecting and encouraging customary sustainable use by indigenous peoples and local communities.

3.3. Certified Wildlife Friendly™ and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

Through its certification programs, Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network (WFEN) contributes to achieving many of the goals and targets set by the SDGs, particularly:



Images credit: un.org

3.4. Certified Wildlife Friendly™

The work that WFEN carries out, particularly the implementation of the criteria required to become Certified Wildlife Friendly™, addresses all of the above and provides a tangible way for brands to support a better future for people and the environment, something to which companies are increasingly committed to improving. By understanding the threats, we can address them; at WFEN we do this by identifying and describing best production practices in landscapes where primary products are sourced, translating these into specific criteria, certifying enterprises that comply with these criteria, and promoting their final Certified Wildlife Friendly™ products.

Certification criteria require that production practices contribute directly to **the conservation of key wildlife species**. This is achieved by certified enterprises entering into formal agreements with farmers, herders, and local communities to reduce those threats that pose a direct or indirect risk to species' survival. The threats can include lethal wildlife management, incidental mortality, and other human-wildlife conflict mitigation measures.

Certified Wildlife Friendly™ focuses on threatened and endangered species, defined by the [IUCN Red List of Threatened Species](#) as Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable, or Near Threatened, as well as other species of concern. Species of concern include [keystone](#) and [indicator](#) species, and predators that may not be listed by IUCN but play a critical functional role in the ecosystem.

WFEN recognizes wildlife stewardship of participating enterprises who employ the best practices and adapt their management in response to changing conditions to allow wildlife to coexist, by awarding them the Certified Wildlife Friendly™ seal. Certified Wildlife Friendly™ is a voluntary certification program based on standards to which enterprises should adhere. These standards do not supersede national, international, or state legislation. All the Certified Wildlife Friendly™ criteria have been formulated through expert consultation and approval.

4. WHY WILDLIFE FRIENDLY® CERTIFICATION?

Wildlife Friendly® certification provides detailed guidance on how to apply **best production practices** in value chains used by the fashion industry. The certification criteria also ensure that **human livelihoods are elevated**, with targeted considerations given to the economic vitality of the local communities involved in the production processes. This certification integrates and connects the sustainability of people, planet, and profit: the triple bottom line and interlinkage of business and conservation.

4.1 Impact of sourcing Certified Wildlife Friendly™

Certification provides assurances to environmentally-conscious consumers purchasing Certified Wildlife Friendly™ products that, through their fashion choices, they too can contribute to making a positive impact on the environment, and wildlife in particular. Examples of the impacts that Certified Wildlife Friendly™ can have at grassroots level include:

- Increased uptake of practices that benefit biodiversity both within and outside of productive areas
- Long-term conservation partnerships that provide technical support for producers coexisting with wildlife
- Incentives for communities to use practices that support connectivity, non-lethal management, and the protection and restoration of native habitats
- Ongoing monitoring of wildlife presence and behavior to help inform adaptive management.

4.2 Illustration of Wildlife Friendly® wool production

The following image illustrates the various elements that make up the value chain of wool – a key primary ingredient/raw material in the fashion industry. From the native wildlife present at source, through the livelihoods of communities, workers, herders, and ranchers, the best production practices can have a positive impact along the chain.

Images:



Conserving endangered native wildlife species.

Image credit: Free stock



Local communities - Supporting livelihoods through sourcing Wildlife Friendly.

Image credit: Federico Gregorio - Producer Cristina García with WF Certificate - Neuquén.



Enabling best practices for the coexistence of wildlife and livestock.

Image credit: Guillermo Harris



Contributing toward conserving diverse landscapes.

Image credit: Guillermo Harris



Sourcing of sustainable wool.

Image credit: Guillermo Harris

VALUE CHAIN



Supply of wool to fashion brands, which enables the production of Wildlife Friendly® sustainable fashion

Image credit: Ricardo Baldi

4.3. The Ecosystem Integration of Certifications

In a landscape of many other certifications, Certified Wildlife Friendly™ is the only certification that integrates and provides a linkage of people-planet-profit through connecting biodiversity conservation with a focus on **specific species, wildlife generally, and community livelihood** improvement. Certified Wildlife Friendly™ is compatible with and complementary to other

standards and certifications, including Global Organic Textile Standard, Textile Exchange's Responsible Animal Fibers Program, and Regenerative Organic Certified.

5. SUSTAINABLE FASHION METHODOLOGIES

The criteria for certification are detailed and targeted to benefit wildlife populations that coexist with those farmers and ranchers producing materials sought by the fashion industry. These criteria are designed to reduce the negative impacts on biodiversity and to improve outcomes for effective and positive production. The detailed standards can be split into key principles that should be followed if a fashion company wishes to source materials that are Wildlife Friendly®, as follows:

i) Transparency and sourcing Certified Wildlife Friendly™ materials

A crucial and first step that wildlife and environmentally-curious fashion brands should take is to know from where the raw materials used in production are coming, especially the region or country and production sites where their raw materials are sourced. It is necessary to have a line of sight to who your producers are in order to improve the outcomes for biodiversity. This enables an understanding of where the raw materials come from and the impact their production is having on the wildlife, ensuring they are Wildlife Friendly®. Fashion companies are encouraged to identify their raw material origins at best to farm-level, and at the minimum to sub-national ecoregion or country-level. WFEN can assist with this process and help fashion companies to 'Find your Farm.'

ii) Biodiversity monitoring

While the quality of available biodiversity datasets is improving, there are still data gaps. Biodiversity monitoring is important wherever production takes place, whether the lands are owned, leased, or under other land ownership or use arrangements. Biodiversity monitoring helps to identify any existing or potential threats to biodiversity. Once threats are identified, mitigation measures can be considered and wildlife can be protected.

Producers play an important role in observing and documenting the presence of species over time to provide a better understanding of the condition of biodiversity – including species richness, abundance, and range at production and material sourcing sites.

Biodiversity monitoring can be achieved through partnerships with conservation experts such as NGOs, universities, researchers, or government agencies to ensure that biodiversity monitoring methods are robust and linked with other monitoring initiatives in

the areas of production. These partnerships are also integral in identifying appropriate threat-reduction measures.

iii) Waste management

Some waste materials attract predators to livestock and precipitate negative interactions. Therefore, waste must be disposed of without any adverse impact on the environment, wildlife, and communities around the production sites.

iv) Pollution

The storage, handling, disposal, and usage of chemicals like dyes must be properly managed without any negative impact on the environment or wildlife. Producers are highly encouraged to find environmentally-friendly alternatives that replace the use of harmful chemicals.

v) Fencing

Fences are barriers to wildlife movement and although they may be necessary to protect crops and livestock, they should be constructed and maintained to maximize wildlife movement across the certified area. In addition, the area managed by the enterprise must allow the passage of native wildlife, including predators and their prey. Options for 'permeable' barriers include gaps or unfenced areas, open gates or lay-down sections of fencing, or fencing that is of suitable height to allow wildlife to pass through.

vi) Livestock management

Certified enterprises must employ a mix of management practices to protect livestock and enable wildlife to share the landscape, including options for acceptable non-lethal predator management practices, which may include:

- a. Use of livestock guardian animals, such as dogs, llamas, and donkeys, has been shown to improve predator deterrence.
- b. Adaptive feeding strategies, such as gathering livestock through feeding and keeping them in a secure location at night or at other strategic periods, may function as a protective strategy.
- c. Lambing and calving can be made more secure by using protected pastures, fenced lots or sheds to secure stock during highly vulnerable periods.

vii) Regenerative Agriculture

Wildlife Friendly® certified enterprises should use management techniques to restore and regenerate their land. Additionally, they must manage livestock in such a way as to conserve native plants, protect sensitive areas such as streams, and promote biodiversity.

5.1. Certified Wildlife Friendly™ Fiber Sourcing

Fashion companies that are taking a step towards sustainable production and the use of certified natural materials can reach out to WFEN and a list of Certified Wildlife Friendly™ suppliers will be provided. Moreover, brands seeking to certify their existing sources of fiber, wool, and more, can begin the process by applying to WFEN. Further information on the application process is available at the Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network [website](#).

6. CASE STUDIES OF CERTIFIED WILDLIFE FRIENDLY™ FIBERS

While the principles and criteria for Certified Wildlife Friendly™ are standardized, implementation varies based on the geography, the material(s), and the ecosystem. To illustrate how Wildlife Friendly approaches are being applied, three case studies are included on Certified Wildlife Friendly™ fibers; the first two feature fibers from Patagonia, namely merino wool and mohair wool. These fibers are produced by applying adaptive management approaches, including permeable fencing, to enable ranchers to coexist with puma (*Puma concolor*) and other predators. The third is a case study on Chianti Cashmere, a Certified Wildlife Friendly® sustainable luxury cashmere operation in the Tuscany region of Italy that raises cashmere goats while using Predator Friendly tools to coexist with wolves.

a) Merino wool from Argentina

Wildlife Conservation Society-Argentina (WCS) is working with local ranchers who are producing Certified Wildlife Friendly™ merino wool. The program reaches over 350 producers and covers more than 300,000 hectares in northern (Neuquén province) and central (Chubut province) Patagonia while providing market linkage for animal fibers and enhancing wildlife conservation measures. The program is applying adaptive management approaches amongst sheep farmers and deploying the use of fencing, flashing lights, and livestock guardian dogs to reduce depredation by wild pumas and gray foxes that attack the farmed livestock. Through Wildlife Friendly® certification, ranchers are committed to coexisting with pumas, guanacos, Andean cats, rheas, and many other endangered species. The production of Certified Wildlife Friendly™ merino wool has led to the conservation of these emblematic wildlife species while improving the livelihoods of local communities in Argentina and enabling access for fashion brands to source Certified Wildlife Friendly™ wool.

b) Mohair wool from Argentina

In the province of Neuquén, in the Patagonia region of Argentina, local goat farmers produce Certified Wildlife Friendly™ mohair, 70% of which is high-quality fine mohair (diameter <28 microns). More than 95% of the producers are small-scale herders, and goat husbandry is their principal source of income. Because goats sustain these families and are fundamental to their livelihoods, herding families take special care to ensure the best possible conditions for, and minimize the stress experienced by, their goats, including the use of unique *criollo* livestock guardian dogs to protect their livestock from predators.

Following years of work to improve land management practices and fiber quality, and with support from WCS Argentina, goat herders participating in Neuquén's *Programa Mohair* are offering both raw fiber and spun yarn under the *Fibras del Viento* (Fibers of the Wind) label. Fibers are available in natural colors and dyes, including green from Yerba mate, the national beverage of Argentina. Fine yarn and finished goods are spun and handcrafted at a small mill operated by cooperative members. To maintain the certification, technical teams from government agricultural agencies collaborate in the verification of adherence to the standards.



Image credits: Ezequiel Infantino - ACU WCS Coope & Ezequiel Infantino

c) Chianti Cashmere

In the Tuscany region of Italy, Certified Wildlife Friendly™ cashmere wool is produced using Predator Friendly® strategies that herders apply to co-exist with wolves. Chianti Cashmere Goat Farm's goat herd produces the raw material for a unique line of exclusive, hand-woven Italian cashmere yarn, accessories, and home textiles. This company originated in 1995 when it imported the first cashmere goats into Italy; with careful cross-breeding with local goats, the herd has developed to create an Italian cashmere goat. Certified Wildlife Friendly™ practices used by Chianti Cashmere include employing a pair of Abruzzo guardian dogs, an ancient breed of shepherd dog raised for centuries in southern Italy to

protect against wolves and bears. In collaboration with the nonprofit Italian group Canislupus Italia, Chianti Cashmere is furthering the implementation of preventative and non-lethal anti-predator solutions to spread Predator Friendly® know-how and certification.



Image credit: Gregorio Ibañez

These case studies demonstrate that Wildlife Friendly® Certification can result in positive outcomes across varying landscapes and farming systems. In Tuscany, Italy, the uniqueness of the program meets the uniqueness of Chianti Cashmere, and in Patagonia, Argentina, a Wildlife Friendly® fiber movement is unfolding across the region as more and more ranchers see the combined benefits of increased product value and real conservation results. There is an urgency to reduce the fashion sector's impact on biodiversity, and tailored Wildlife Friendly® approaches can offer solutions to mitigate and even turn positive the outcomes for biodiversity, human livelihoods, animal wellbeing, and climate.

Further information

The Fashion Pact members that are seeking more information on how to certify their existing sources of fiber, wool, and other raw materials or to source Certified Wildlife Friendly™ Wool can contact WFEN Executive Director: Christine Lippai christine@wildlifefriendly.org

