

**Preserving, even enhancing bio-diversity should be at the heart of every decision we take.**

It's a cynical 'lip-service' we're paying at the moment, both in Wales and beyond, to our own policies of providing cleaner air, promoting bio-diversity and slowing global warming.

With every copse we cut, marsh we drain or field we cover with tarmac, we're operating a short-sighted 'rob Peter to pay Paul' mentality. Not just do our 'quick fixes' create huge problems for future generations to solve in terms of eroding eco-systems and damaging quality of life; destroying bio-infrastructure makes no long or even medium term *economic* sense.

A jigsaw effect of the big and small developmental decisions in every country being made with no intelligent regard to the overall affect on biodiversity and eco-system health has caused an up to 58% decline in wild life between 1970 and 2012 (WWF, Living Planet Report). In that time, the human population has more than doubled. This is no coincidence but a causal relationship. The increase in sheer numbers of consumers is worrying enough, but when increasing affluence is factored in – not just in traditional high consuming countries but across the world, the disastrous effects should ring alarm bells for any responsible government.

We cannot make decisions that will cause the wilful destruction, fragmentation or displacement of wildlife anymore. With even recently common species like the European hedgehog in serious decline, we need to change our very thinking.

The route we do or do not choose in the M4 debate should be a turning point, a line in the sand for us. We should start thinking and planning both laterally and vertically: imagining the consequences of our actions multiplied across countries worldwide; anticipating the effects of our actions in the struggle of future generations.

These future generations will not praise us that we took drastic action to move more cars more quickly from Bristol to Cardiff.