

More articles *** Choose a subject ***



How leading environmentalists do their bit

When it comes to the big issues, it's individuals that count, and so we asked a selection of leading environmentalists how they were doing their bit.

Words: David Nicholson-Lord

[Page 1](#) [Page 2](#) [Page 3](#)

It's a pity we're stuck with 'sustainable development' to describe what the Johannesburg Summit is about. As phrases go, it's a conversation-killer. The politicians haven't helped either; intoning the words so routinely we've stopped believing them.

[Print version](#)

Does sustainability amount to more than a row of beans? For the environmentalists who responded to our pre-Johannesburg survey, the answer is clearly yes. It means (for instance) turning off your fridge in winter, giving up your conventional, gas-guzzling car, buying green electricity, shopping locally and growing your own veggies (beans included). It means lots of tricky choices and it means making those choices easier for people, which is where governments - and politicians - come in.

Wildfacts
Find out about your favourite animals

Local and national

We found that home composting and recycling are common features of a sustainable lifestyle (and surely something that everybody can do). But other choices seem harder - George Monbiot doesn't shop in supermarkets, but is that realistic for everybody? With the growth of organic produce box schemes and wholesalers, then possibly, yes. It's a question of finding out what's available in your area.

As part of personal choices towards a sustainable lifestyle, the job you do is clearly crucial. It's probably more difficult, for instance, if you run an oil company. On the other hand, there are ways of linking your professional and personal goals - Jonathon Porritt made Forum for the Future a 'carbon-neutral' organisation, while World Bank environment director Kristalina Georgieva organised a car pool at work. Simon Lyster took the ultimate risk - he gave up his job as a solicitor with no idea of what he was going to do - and he now runs The Wildlife Trusts.

[Page 1](#) [Page 2](#) [Page 3](#)

From an original article in the September 2002 issue of *BBC Wildlife Magazine* - And so say all of us.

More articles *** Choose a subject ***



How leading environmentalists do their bit

When it comes to the big issues, it's individuals that count, and so we asked a selection of leading environmentalists how they were doing their bit.

Words: David Nicholson-Lord

[Page 1](#) [Page 2](#) [Page 3](#)

The questions we put to our panel were:

- 1 What personal goal would you set yourself towards a more sustainable lifestyle?
- 2 What step or steps have you already taken that you feel have been significant?

David Bellamy
Environmental campaigner

- 1 A woodland burial.
- 2 I use public transport whenever possible and plan to drive a fuel-cell car when available. I've campaigned for redundant North Sea oil-rigs and pipelines to be used as artificial reefs or to conduct CO₂ back from power stations to be stored from whence it came and for all green belts to be properly protected.

Simon Lyster
Director general, The Wildlife Trusts

- 1 To use my car less and my bicycle more.
- 2 Quitting my job as a City solicitor 20 years ago and deciding to work for wildlife.

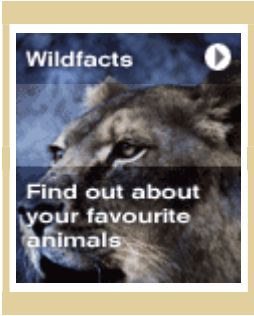
George Monbiot
Environmental campaigner & journalist

- 1 Reducing my own carbon consumption to below the maximum sustainable level per person per year. I travel by train a lot and fly about once every two years, which means I'm still far above the sustainability threshold.
- 2 Junking my car in 1989, not shopping in supermarkets since 1991, growing most of my own vegetables, composting and recycling and trying to reduce my consumption of everything except the invasive crayfish taking over the river system here, which also happens to be delicious. Interestingly, none of this has been painful, partly because I live in a city that makes it relatively easy. But individual action won't get us very far unless it's backed by government action. This means we have to be ethical citizens first, ethical consumers second.

[Page 1](#) [Page 2](#) [Page 3](#)



[Print version](#)



More articles  



How leading environmentalists do their bit

When it comes to the big issues, it's individuals that count, and so we asked a selection of leading environmentalists how they were doing their bit.

Words: David Nicholson-Lord

[Page 1](#)

[Page 2](#)

[Page 3](#)

Jonathon Porritt
Forum for the Future

1 Walking - I just don't do enough of it. Weekends flash by with nothing more than a stroll on one of the hills surrounding Cheltenham; holiday walks are constrained by daughterly reluctance. Time to get that sorted - the walking, that is, not the daughters.

2 Forum for the Future is totally committed to being a 'carbon-neutral' organisation, and so we buy green electricity from renewable sources and set aside a sum of money every year to sequester the equivalent amount of carbon that we cause to be emitted through our travel.

Charles Secrett
Executive director, Friends of the Earth

1 Running my household as if the Earth and other people matter and being an active constituent and voter on sustainability issues.

2 I have always applied for jobs where the role and agenda match my principles.

Baroness Young
Chief executive, Environment Agency

1 I would aim to make my lifestyle less carbon intensive. I already travel a lot by public transport. But walking whenever I can would be good for the environment and my waistline.


2 The Environment Agency regulates to protect our environment. Over the past 10 years, emissions of substances such as sulphur dioxide, lead and dioxins have fallen by more than two thirds. And we now have the cleanest air, drinking water, rivers and beaches since the industrial revolution. But there is still much more to do.

[Page 1](#)

[Page 2](#)

[Page 3](#)



 [Print version](#)

