

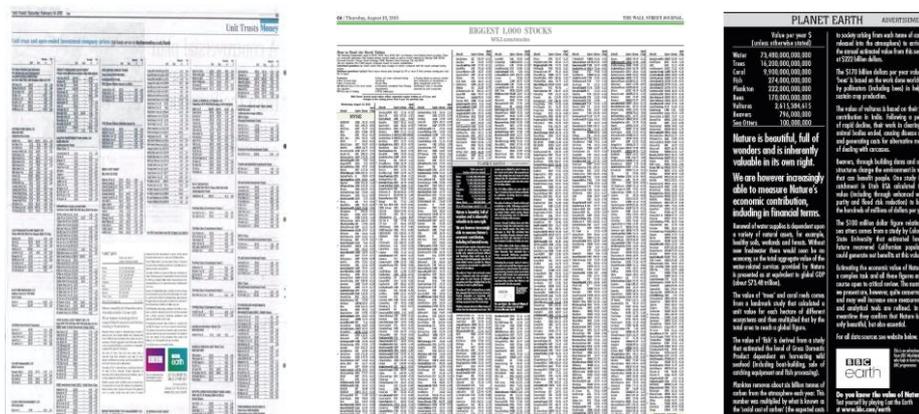
# PRESS RELEASE

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## BBC EARTH PUTS NATURE ON THE STOCK EXCHANGE

Every year bees contribute over **£106.2 billion (AUD \$225.7 billion)** to the global economy; coral over £6.1 trillion (AUD \$13.1 trillion); plankton over £138.7 billion (AUD \$294.7 billion) and beavers almost £500 million (AUD \$1,057 million). These figures were released today by BBC Earth in a pilot model for an Earth Index that demonstrates the financial contribution that nature makes to the world economy every year.

BBC Earth published the Earth Index in the financial sections of the Wall Street Journal (US); Times (London); Singapore Business Times (Singapore) and the Economic Times (India) putting nature on the stock exchange for the first time.



Neil Nightingale, Creative Director for BBC Earth commented: “When you see the figures in black and white it’s illuminating to see that the annual revenues of the world’s most successful companies, Apple; General Motors; Nestle; Bank of China\* all pale in comparison to the financial return to our economy from natural assets.”

The Earth Index was devised to place nature at the heart of economic conversation by understanding the financial value of the services we receive each year from natural resources. To create the Earth Index, BBC Earth worked with British environmental specialist Tony Juniper to commission a scoping study from the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre.

“We scoured the available research and data to find comparable figures to company stock listings and settled on the financial value delivered each year,” said Juniper.



“What this unequivocally shows is the major contribution that nature makes to our health, wealth and security.”

Nightingale added: “By recognising the practical and economic benefits that we derive from natural assets we can better understand the impact of long term changes in natural capital.”

BBC Earth’s ‘nature stock exchange’ is based on a study of the existing available data and the Earth Index pilots a model for reporting the financial contribution that nature makes to the global economy. To find out more and view the source material visit: <http://www.bbc.com/earth/story/cost-the-earth-sources>.

“Embarking on this study revealed the paucity of consistent information available about the financial importance of nature to our society,” said Nightingale. “Our review of the existing research has shown us how vital the ecological economy is to us - and yet there are no consistent measures for natural capital. Nature of course has an intrinsic value over and above its monetary contribution. But what the nature stock exchange shows is that its economic importance cannot be ignored.”

To accompany the Earth Index, BBC Earth has created ‘Cost the Earth’, an interactive feature that challenges people to guess the value of global companies such as Starbucks compared to natural assets such as Otters or commodities such as Diamonds. To play the game and find out more about BBC Earth’s ‘nature stock exchange’ visit: [www.bbc.com/earth](http://www.bbc.com/earth).

Examples of the services that we receive from natural assets include:

### **Coral**

**Valued at £6,187,500,000,000** (AUD \$13,150,000,000,000)

*Coral reefs provide vital protection from storms; support multi-million pound tourism industries; capture and store carbon and are nurseries for the young of commercially important fish species.*

### **Bees**

**Valued at £106,250,000,000** (AUD \$225,837,000,000)

*Bees are vital to crop pollination worldwide. In Maoxian county in Sichuan China, fruit farmers now perform this job themselves, hand pollinating their crops following the loss of their natural pollinators in the 1980s.*

### **Vultures**

**Once valued at £1,634,615,385** (AUD \$3,474,426,000)

*We understand the financial value of vultures after their sharp decline in India brought to light the vital service they performed in cleaning and removing animal*

carcasses. Their decline created a public health risk due to remains being left to rot and generated significant costs for the communities who had to pay for carcasses to be disposed.

## **Beavers**

**Valued at £497,500,000** (AUD \$1,057,450,000)

*An individual beaver was valued at £80,487.72 (AUD \$171,077) per year\*\* for the contribution they make to flood risk reduction; enhanced water purity and improved water storage through building dams and other structures that change the environment in ways that can benefit people.*

-Ends-

For more information, please contact:

Nicole Hurren, BBC Worldwide ANZ, ph: 02 9744 4551, 0420 538 200 [nicole.hurren@bbc.com](mailto:nicole.hurren@bbc.com)

## **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

**For additional examples of the financial value contributed by each natural asset listed in the Nature Stock Exchange please see the please see the accompanying Earth Index case studies.**

\*Figures published by Forbes: <http://www.forbes.com/global2000/list/#tab:overall>

\*\*The individual beaver value was calculated by combining the total estimated median populations in the north and south Escalante basins (approximately 6, 500 animals) and dividing the total estimated value (\$796 million) of the whole beaver population by that number. Equalling \$122, 000 which equates to £80, 487.72 at the exchange rate at the time of going to press.

Currency conversions accurate at time of publication.

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