

Shear Destruction: Wool, Fashion and the Biodiversity Crisis

From [Center for Biological Diversity](#) and [Fashion Justice Circumfauna Initiative](#)

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[Read the full report by the Center for Biological Diversity and Collective Fashion Justice's CIRCUMFAUNA Initiative.](#)



While the environmental impacts of the meat industry have gained significant attention, the role of farmed animals used in the fashion industry is often omitted from the conversation or, worse, greenwashed.



From habitat degradation caused by grazing sheep to the chemicals used in scouring, the entire process of rearing sheep and turning shorn wool into usable fiber is riddled with threats to wildlife.

Climate Change

Compared to other materials used in similar types of knitwear, thermal layers and suits, the average climate cost of sheep's wool is **3 times greater** than acrylic and more than **5 times greater** than conventionally grown cotton, according to the Higg Index scoring system.

#ShearDestruction

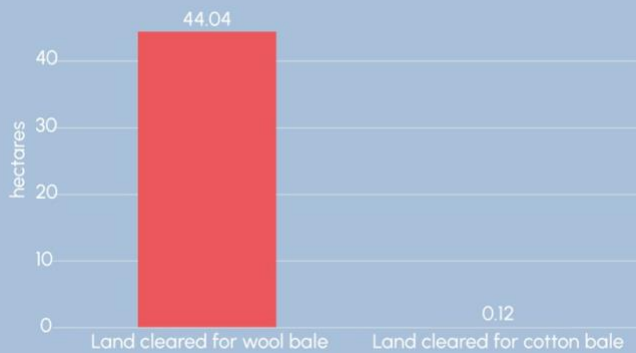
Collective Fashion Justice

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#Shear Destruction

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Land which must be cleared, rather than kept natural, for fibre production



Collective Fashion Justice and the Center for Biological Diversity's 'Shear Destruction' report

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The fashion industry can no longer sit on the sidelines of the climate and extinction crises. It must accept responsibility for its environmental impacts and take action to create a world where people, wildlife and beauty can all thrive.

The Fashion Industry Should Do the Following:

1. Fashion industry associations, initiatives and certifiers should update their sustainability language to acknowledge the harms to biodiversity caused by wool.
2. Clothing and textile brands should publicly commit to phasing out or reducing wool by at least 50% by 2025.
3. Large clothing and textile brands should invest in the research and development of wool-alternative material innovation.
4. Fashion designers should commit to phasing out or reducing wool by at least 50% by 2025 and supporting material innovation by using alternative materials in their clothing lines by 2023.
5. In phasing out wool, the industry should embrace alternatives that do not depend on fossil fuel-derived fibers (such as acrylic, polyester and nylon) because they come associated with their own harmful climate and environmental consequences.

How Individuals Can Help

Wool has long been a popular fabric for its aesthetics and its performance in the outdoors. Although it's often marketed as "sustainable," wool is not a fiber simply provided by nature — it is a scaled product of modern industrial, chemical, ecological and genetic intervention that's a key contributor to devastating biodiversity loss. But a better path forward exists, with exciting innovations in alternative materials that are not derived from fossil fuels.

The most sustainable materials are the ones you already have in your closet. Resist the temptation to buy new clothing or gear that you don't need. Care for your clothing so it doesn't need to be replaced as frequently. Wool (and many other fabrics) don't need to be washed after every wear. By only washing when necessary, you'll save water and energy and extend the life of your garments. If you find holes, repair them instead of discarding the clothing.

Choose fabrics that aren't derived from animals or fossil fuels. From materials that can replicate the look and feel of shearing to plant-based waterproof fabrics, there are dozens of options already on the market or in development that can meet — and even exceed — the look, feel and performance of wool. By choosing truly sustainable fabrics, you can help create demand for a just transition in the fashion industry. **[Learn more about alternative materials.](#)**

Tell clothing brands and stores to phase out wool. Companies need to hear that their customers are done buying into the greenwashing of wool and want materials that are better for people, animals and the planet. Contact customer service at your favorite companies and urge them to commit to phasing out or reducing their use of wool. **[Join us in calling on top brands to make a commitment to less wool and more investment in innovative materials.](#)**

Push back against wool greenwashing. Use our **[social media toolkit](#)** to spread the word about how wool production harms wildlife and the environment. You can also reach out to brands on social media to ask them to phase out wool, support those using alternative materials, and share your favorite wool-free fashion.