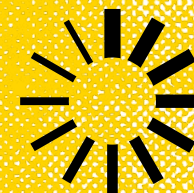


# **WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2020**

## **A PRACTICAL GUIDE**

**for individuals, faith groups, businesses,  
cities, governments, schools & universities,  
youth groups and civil society**



**TIME  
FOR  
NATURE**



**WORLD  
ENVIRONMENT  
DAY**

**UN**   
environment  
programme

# WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY GUIDE



**The theme for World Environment Day, 5 June 2020 is biodiversity — a call to action to combat the accelerating species loss and degradation of the natural world. One million plant and animal species risk extinction, largely due to human activities. Hosted by Colombia, in partnership with Germany, World Environment Day urges us to rethink how our economic systems have evolved and the impact they have on the environment. These are issues the world cannot lose sight of even as we tackle the coronavirus pandemic and the ongoing climate crisis. Colombia has one of the highest diversities of species in the world, boasting among many others, 3500 types of orchids and 19 per cent of the world’s bird types. The government has made biodiversity preservation a national priority.**

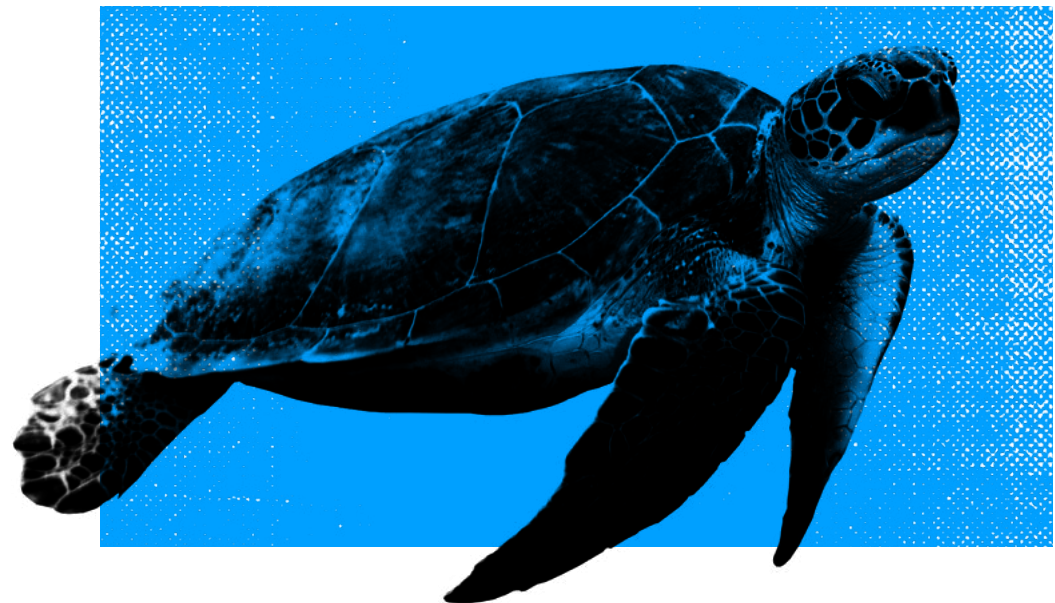
**The [World Environment Day website](#) provides latest updates on registration, online events, the agenda and live feeds.**

# WHAT IS BIODIVERSITY AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Biodiversity, or biological diversity, is the variability of living things that makes up life on Earth. It encompasses the 8 million or so species on the planet – from plants and animals to fungi and bacteria – the ecosystems that house them – such as oceans, forests, mountain environments and coral reefs – as well as the genetic diversity found among them.

Healthy ecosystems, rich with biodiversity, are fundamental to human existence. Ecosystems sustain human life in a myriad of ways, cleaning our air, purifying our water, ensuring the availability of nutritious foods, nature-based medicines and raw materials, and reducing the occurrence of disasters.

But we have not taken care of nature. We are witnessing unparalleled bushfires in Brazil, United States and Australia, locust invasions in the Horn of Africa, and the death of coral reefs. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic – the latest in a string of zoonotic disease outbreaks – shows that the planet's health is linked to our health.



# WHAT IS AT STAKE?

One million plant and animal species are facing extinction – some within decades – according to the latest report by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services ([IPBES](#)). Every species plays an important role in keeping an ecosystem balanced and healthy. Losses in biodiversity and habitat can increase the spread of infectious diseases and viruses.

The global economy is intricately tied to biodiversity. Services provided by biodiversity are worth an estimated US\$ 125-140 trillion per year, more than one and a half times the size of global GDP. The food we eat, the air we breathe and the water we drink come from nature. As we head towards a population of 10 billion people on this planet, we must embrace the opportunities and value of the natural environment and not work against it.

The **good** news is that we can reverse the trends of biodiversity loss by **reimagining** our relationship with nature and **acting now** to increase ambition and accountability for its protection. We must conserve and restore wildlife and wild spaces, change the way we produce and consume food, promote environmentally friendly infrastructure and transform economies to become custodians of nature.

The world's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has shown early action and solidarity to tackle pressing issues that threaten our societies. As countries start to plan ways to build back better, getting nature at the heart of all decision making for people and the planet must be our top priority.

**“Biodiversity – the essential variety of life forms on Earth – continues to decline in every region of the world, significantly reducing nature’s capacity to contribute to people’s well-being. This alarming trend endangers economies, livelihoods, food security and the quality of life of people everywhere, according to four landmark science reports written by more than 550 leading experts from over 100 countries.”**

Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform  
on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (2019)

# WHAT ARE THE DRIVERS OF BIODIVERSITY LOSS?

The five main drivers of biodiversity loss as identified by the latest [IPBES](#) and [GEO-6 report](#) stem from our activity. Biodiversity loss can be prevented through changing what we consume, how we produce and where we protect nature. Stronger environmental policies and accountability measures will help drive these changes in behaviour.

## LAND-USE CHANGE

Our demand for food and resources is driving deforestation, changing patterns of land use, and destroying natural habitats across the globe. Twenty-six per cent of the planet's ice-free land is used for livestock grazing and 33 per cent of croplands are for livestock feed. Today, one-third of the world's topsoil has been degraded from acidification, pollution and other unsustainable land management practices.

## OVEREXPLOITATION OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS

The over-exploitation of resources by people, including for fishing, logging and wildlife poaching is threatening the very existence of creatures great and small; from iconic wildlife, like the pangolin, the most illegally trafficked mammal on the planet, to the beluga sturgeon, prized for its caviar. Poverty can force people into activities like poaching and illegal logging, while unsustainable development encroaches upon wild areas and fuels demand for wildlife products.

## CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Climate change and the increase in extreme weather drives habitat loss and degradation. For example, warming seas are melting sea ice; intact ice flows are critical for sustaining polar bears, seals and fishing birds, meanwhile acidifying oceans are bleaching coral reefs. One estimate suggests that by 2050, one in six species could be threatened with extinction if current warming trends continue.

## POLLUTION

Pollution is a major and growing threat to biodiversity, with devastating effects on freshwater and marine habitats. There may now be around 5 trillion macro and microplastic pieces floating in the ocean, making up 60 to 90 per cent of marine debris. Open waste dumps impact plants and animals, while pesticides, fertilizers and other chemicals harm pollinators like bees and bats, which are natural predators of pests.

## INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

Invasive species threaten biodiversity by acting as parasites or competitors, altering habitats, crossbreeding with local species and bringing diseases. Globalization has increased the movement and introduction of species beyond their original ranges through trade and tourism, disrupting their new host communities and habitats.



# BIODIVERSITY LOSS AND COVID-19

This World Environment Day, **as many are isolated at home, let us** reflect on what got us here.

The COVID 19 pandemic is a reminder that human health is linked to the planet's health. Coronaviruses are zoonotic, meaning they are transmitted between animals and people and research shows that these diseases are on the rise. At present, about 1 billion cases of illness, and millions of deaths, occur every year from zoonoses. Sixty per cent of all known infectious diseases in humans are zoonotic, as are 75 per cent of all emerging infectious diseases.

Scientists predict that if we do not change our behaviour towards wild habitats, we are in danger of more virus outbreaks. To prevent future zoonoses, we must address the multiple threats to ecosystems and wildlife, including habitat loss and fragmentation, illegal trade, pollution, invasive species and, increasingly, climate change.

World Environment Day aims to inspire everyone to make their voices heard — citizens need to urge their governments to deliver on their commitments to safeguard nature, end pollution and ensure that environmental laws are upheld. Companies need to develop sustainable supply chains, as well as agricultural and manufacturing practices that do not harm the environment. Citizens and civil society groups should look at how to preserve and restore degraded ecosystems. And consumers should rethink what they buy. With our lives upended, we can unite to find ways not only to live well in harmony with each other but also with nature.

## **It's Time #ForNature**

**This World Environment Day,  
It's Time #ForNature.  
Time to reimagine our  
relationship with nature.  
Time to put nature at the heart  
of all our decision making.  
We know what it will take to  
live well in harmony  
with nature.**

**Will we prioritize our common  
home enough to heed her call?**

# HOW WE'RE ASKING YOU TO HELP

**This practical guide is structured in three parts: learn, share, and act. It is sensitive to the fact that many people may be isolating due to the COVID-19 pandemic. All you need to participate is a connection to the internet, a book, or even just your imagination.**

## LEARN:

Being confined to our homes is the perfect opportunity to learn more about the wild species and habitats with which we share our planet. This time indoors can be a chance to reflect on the role of nature in our lives and the ways in which we can advocate for positive change.

## SHARE:

In the build-up to World Environment Day, which is 5 June, UNEP will be opening conversation threads in eight languages across its social media channels. We will be asking you to tell us why it's time #ForNature. This will be the opportunity for you to share why you love our natural world, for governments to showcase their efforts to protect nature and for organizations to advocate for their cause.

## ACT:

Following 5 June and leading up to the fifth UN Environment Assembly in 2021– when the world's environment ministers will set global priorities – we ask all of you to begin to act on the knowledge you have acquired to help end biodiversity loss and the climate crisis. Only by doing our part can we allow nature to heal and ensure a better and healthier future for everyone.

# WHAT CAN INDIVIDUALS DO?



Each one of us has a role to play in ending biodiversity loss and preserving nature for human well-being. As individuals we must rethink what we buy and use and become conscious consumers. If we are to change our current course of destruction to one of custodianship of nature, we must first **LEARN** about what we can do; **SHARE** that knowledge with our family and friends on World Environment Day and beyond; and **ACT** on the things we need to change.



**Here are some resources for you to **LEARN** about how you can protect nature:**

- Find out what your city and national government is doing to protect the environment
- Join Earth School and take part in the 30 lessons on the environment hosted by TED-Ed and curated by some of the best nature teachers in the world  
[ted.ed.com/EarthSchool](https://ted.ed.com/EarthSchool)
- Learn about how you can help fight climate change through the United Nations' Act Now campaign  
[un.org/en/actnow/](https://un.org/en/actnow/)
- Learn about plastic pollution and how it affects marine species through UNEP's Clean Seas campaign [cleanseas.org/](https://cleanseas.org/)
- Find out about the endangered species that are trafficked in the illegal wildlife trade  
[wildfor.life/the-campaign](https://wildfor.life/the-campaign)
- Look into the Anatomy of Action, which maps out actions individuals can take to reduce their carbon footprint  
[anatomyofaction.org](https://anatomyofaction.org)
- Sign-up to [iNaturalist](https://iNaturalist.org), an online community of naturalists, where you can record your observations of plants and animals, meet other nature-lovers, and explore the natural world
- Learn about the emissions-gap left for countries to limit global temperatures to 1.5°C.  
[unenvironment.org/interactive/emissions-gap-report/2019/](https://unenvironment.org/interactive/emissions-gap-report/2019/)
- The Nature Conservancy is a global non-profit working to create a world where people and nature can thrive
- Read these reports on land use, land rights and related impact on the environment  
[catalogue.unccd.int/823\\_GLO\\_Full\\_Report\\_ENG.pdf](https://catalogue.unccd.int/823_GLO_Full_Report_ENG.pdf)  
[catalogue.unccd.int/825\\_Transformative\\_action\\_brochure%20GM.pdf](https://catalogue.unccd.int/825_Transformative_action_brochure%20GM.pdf)  
[catalogue.unccd.int/1210\\_UNCCD\\_SPI\\_2019\\_Report\\_1.2.pdf](https://catalogue.unccd.int/1210_UNCCD_SPI_2019_Report_1.2.pdf)
- Learn more about the International Plant Protection Convention [here](#), see this [guide](#) for tips on how to communicate about the issue, and use this [resource](#) for social media assets
- Find out if your cosmetics and products contain harmful microbeads through the Beat the Microbead app [beatthemicrobead.org/download-the-beat-the-microbead-app-and-take-part-in-ocean-conservation/](https://beatthemicrobead.org/download-the-beat-the-microbead-app-and-take-part-in-ocean-conservation/)
- IUCN's #NatureforAll [Discovery Zone](#) offers a range of creative tools – from videos to lesson plans, to comic books – to help you learn about nature

**Here are some ideas for how you can **SHARE** the message on World Environment Day:**

- Head to UNEP's social media feeds from 28 May to 5 June and share with the world why action for nature is so critical. Be sure to use the #ForNature and #WorldEnvironmentDay hashtags
- Tag a couple of people/organizations/companies in your reply and ask them to join the conversation
- CITIES4FORESTS has launched the Forest Challenge. Join the photo contest and plant a tree [cities4forests.com/forest-challenge/](https://cities4forests.com/forest-challenge/)
- Be accurate in the information you share by ensuring you use reputable sources to counter misinformation

**Here's how you can **ACT** for nature:**

- Change your diet to more environmentally friendly foods, especially your main protein sources
- Travel less - limit your travel when things go back to normal after the Coronavirus pandemic
- Leave some wild green spaces in your garden where pollinators and ground dwelling insects can thrive
- Let your city and national governments know that it is important they meet environmental targets they've pledged
- Avoid buying single-use plastics. Plastic waste that ends up in nature is often mistaken for food by animals both on land and at sea. For many species, it can cause severe injury and death
- Recycle as much as you can
- Plant an urban garden on your balcony or backyard or get involved in supporting a community urban garden with native flowering plants
- Minimize use of household chemicals that can have toxic effects on soil and groundwater. Instead, experiment with natural products, such as vinegar and plain old soap and water
- Create a compost in your garden or windowsill and grow some of your own produce
- Explore how to buy locally produced products and foods

# WHAT CAN FAITH LEADERS AND FAITH GROUPS DO?



Faith groups have a role to play in ending biodiversity loss and preserving nature for human wellbeing. Faith leaders at every level can inspire worshippers to live in harmony with the earth and seek green jobs. If we are to become true custodians of nature, we must first **LEARN** about what we can do; **SHARE** that knowledge with our community on World Environment Day and beyond; and once it is safe to do so, **ACT** on the things we need to change.

**Here are some resources for faith groups to **LEARN** about how they can protect nature:**

- UNEP's Faith for Earth Initiative aims to encourage and engage with faith-based organizations toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and fulfilling the 2030 Agenda [unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/faith-earth-initiative/religions-and-environmental-protection](https://unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/faith-earth-initiative/religions-and-environmental-protection)
- The Yale Forum on religion and ecology provides a library of resources regarding different religions and their teachings on the environment [fore.yale.edu/search/node/biodiversity](https://fore.yale.edu/search/node/biodiversity)
- Laudato Si, the second encyclical of Pope Francis laments environmental degradation and global warming [www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)

- Islam and the Environment is a guide for educators of children offering teaching aids, simple tasks and creative activities [issuu.com/lutfiomar/docs/teachers-guide\\_body\\_v3](https://issuu.com/lutfiomar/docs/teachers-guide_body_v3)
- You can find Judaism-related educational resources on the environment including activities, discussions and lesson plans at Aytzim, a non-profit environmental organization [aytzim.org/resources/educational-materials](https://aytzim.org/resources/educational-materials)
- Human Responsibility and the Environment is a journal article written from the Hindu Perspective [digitalcommons.butler.edu/cgi/view-content.cgi?article=1077&context=-jhcs](https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/cgi/view-content.cgi?article=1077&context=-jhcs)
- The Sikh community's contribution to the UNDP/Alliance of Religions and Conservation Plans whose aim is to help the world's major religious traditions improve their relationship with the environment, can be found here [arcworld.org/downloads/Sikh-EcoSikh-Seedplan-5YP.pdf](https://arcworld.org/downloads/Sikh-EcoSikh-Seedplan-5YP.pdf)

**Here are some ideas for how you can **SHARE** the message on World Environment Day:**

- Lead an online religious sermon, homily, discussion or similar conversations highlighting parts of faith books that underline protection for the environment
- Share faith passages on environmental protection on your social media accounts and tag other faith groups to do the same
- Organize a donation drive for an environmental cause in your area to which worshippers can contribute
- Highlight changes your place of worship will make to become more sustainable once in-person activities resume and encourage worshippers to do the same
- Share info about the COVID-19 pandemic and how it relates to biodiversity loss to help counteract misinformation



- Pair up with a social enterprise that provides renewable energy for a discounted price for worshippers and encourage them to join
- Pair up with a local supermarket to collect expired food that you can then give for free to the needy

**Here's how you can **ACT** for nature:**

- Encourage learning about biodiversity conservation in prayers
- Transform places of worship into environmentally friendly and sustainable venues, setting an example for the community
- In faith teachings, discuss the importance of conserving biodiversity, as well as poaching's devastating impacts on nature and the economy
- Encourage healthy eating habits, including ways to reduce the consumption of meat and encourage other unsustainable choices

- Enhance the concept of protected areas managed by faith-based organizations
- As faith-based organizations and religious institutions own 5 per cent of commercial forests on earth, encourage sustainable practices to protect and regenerate forests
- Encourage tree plantings at gatherings
- Distribute seeds of native plants to faith followers during faith gatherings
- Separate waste and recycle solid waste by producing compost to be used as fertilizers
- Take part in negotiations and conferences convened by governments and international organizations on the environment
- Emphasize a need to “build back better” following COVID-19 with environment at the heart of decision making
- Mobilise followers to take collective actions to reduce waste and consume less

# WHAT CAN BUSINESSES DO?



The private sector has a key role to play in curbing biodiversity loss and preserving natural resources. Businesses rely on their host environments and ecosystems for inputs into production and manufacturing processes. They can incorporate bold, sustainable practices in their supply chains and financing. If we are to change the current course of destruction to one of custodianship for nature, we must first **LEARN** about what we can do; **SHARE** that knowledge with our community on World Environment Day and beyond; and **ACT** on the things we need to change.

**Here are some resources for businesses to **LEARN** about how they can protect nature:**

- The United Nations Global Compact is a non-binding UN pact to encourage businesses worldwide to adopt sustainable and socially responsible policies, and to report on their implementation  
[unglobalcompact.org](https://unglobalcompact.org)
- The One Planet Network is a global commitment to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production in both developed and developing countries.  
[oneplanetnetwork.org](https://oneplanetnetwork.org)
- [UNEP Private Sector Engagement resources](#), include strategy reports and factsheets
- The UNEP [2019 Global Status Report for Buildings and the Construction Sector](#) examines the key drivers of carbon dioxide emissions in the building industry
- The GEO for Business briefs aim to bring the science of UNEP's Global Environment Outlook to the business community for the transformational change needed to build a green and circular economy. Better Business, Better World, a report by the Business Commission, identifies actions business leaders can take to set the world on the path to sustainable, inclusive growth  
[report.businesscommission.org/report](https://report.businesscommission.org/report)
- The OECD- Private Sector Peer Learning Policy Brief explores climate change and ways to promote green growth  
[oecd.org/dac/peer-reviews/Policy-Brief-4-Private-Sector-Engagement-to-Address-Climate-Change-and-Promote-Green-Growth.pdf](https://oecd.org/dac/peer-reviews/Policy-Brief-4-Private-Sector-Engagement-to-Address-Climate-Change-and-Promote-Green-Growth.pdf)
- Learn more about the International Plant Protection Convention [here](#), see this [guide](#) for tips on how to communicate about the issue, and use this [resource](#) for social media assets.
- Read these reports on land use, land rights and related impact on the environment  
[catalogue.unccd.int/823\\_GLO\\_Full\\_Report\\_ENG.pdf](https://catalogue.unccd.int/823_GLO_Full_Report_ENG.pdf)  
[catalogue.unccd.int/825\\_Transformative\\_action\\_brochure%20GM.pdf](https://catalogue.unccd.int/825_Transformative_action_brochure%20GM.pdf)  
[catalogue.unccd.int/1210\\_UNCCD\\_SPI\\_2019\\_Report\\_1.2.pdf](https://catalogue.unccd.int/1210_UNCCD_SPI_2019_Report_1.2.pdf)
- Consult these resources to learn how to protect land from degradation  
[catalogue.unccd.int/1210\\_UNCCD\\_SPI\\_2019\\_Report\\_1.2.pdf](https://catalogue.unccd.int/1210_UNCCD_SPI_2019_Report_1.2.pdf)  
<https://knowledge.unccd.int/drought-toolbox>
- Learn about good land stewardship by consulting this [podcast](#) and this [knowledge tool](#) developed by the UN Convention to Combat Desertification
- This European Commission report examines best environmental practices for the food and beverage sector  
[ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eur-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/best-environmental-management-practice-food-and-beverage-manufacturing-sector](https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eur-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/best-environmental-management-practice-food-and-beverage-manufacturing-sector)

**Here are some ideas for how businesses can **SHARE** the message on World Environment Day:**

- Announce a new initiative, target, or transformational action that will improve your environmental footprint and explain how you will achieve it
- Launch an open call for innovative ideas to make your business more environmentally mindful
- Join the CEO Carbon Neutral Challenge
- Consider becoming part of a coalition, such as Business for Nature, that calls for action to reverse nature loss
- Announce the removal of single-use plastic in your business operations and supply chains on social media and tag other businesses to do so
- Announce new measures to reduce food waste and tackle carbon emissions
- If you are a fashion business, consider publicizing the adoption of natural dyes and fabrics in your products

- Green your firm's roofs or facades by planting trees or flowers to improve thermal comfort and increase biodiversity
- Encourage staff and clients to join World Environment Day celebrations by asking them for their suggestions on how the business can contribute to restoring and preserving nature

**Here's how business can **ACT** for nature:**

- Understand, value and disclose your impact and dependency on nature
- If your business requires raw material, responsibly source through certifications like Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC), B Corp or Rainforest Alliance Certified
- Support efforts by governments to invest in land management of watershed areas to improve water quality and quantity, and to achieve benefits for people and ecosystems

- Create market mechanisms to offset carbon, such as allowing farmers to participate in a voluntary carbon market where they can be rewarded for adopting conservation practices such as no-till farming and planting cover crops
- Transform investments and operations to generate no net loss and a positive gain in biodiversity
- Halt deforestation and work towards zero natural habitat conversion for production
- Consider fully the ecosystem service benefits and natural capital costs incurred by your economic activities
- Incorporate sustainability concerns at the earliest stages of planning
- Look at how to produce, distribute, consume and dispose of resources in ways that optimize resource use, minimize greenhouse gas emissions and avoid harmful chemicals that hurt biodiversity



- Use green building materials like those sourced from waste streams, sustainably produced regenerative materials, solar powered shingles and efficient insulation
- Source locally to support local value chains, and where possible, source sustainably farmed or harvested products
- Invest in research and development of climate-smart technologies for your business
- UN Business Guide on COVID-19 provides an opportunity to private sector to contribute and support efforts to tackle this crisis
- UN Global Compact has created a for CEOs to record video on their companies activities in response to COVID-19 (CEOs Taking Action)

# WHAT CAN CITIES DO?



Cities house the majority of people living on the planet today and consume around 75 per cent of the resources that come from nature. By 2050, the UN predicts 80 per cent of the world population will live in urban areas. Consequently, cities have a huge role to play in preserving the planet's finite resources and providing services for people. If we are to change the current course of destruction and embrace greater custodianship of nature, we must first **LEARN** about what we can do; **SHARE** that knowledge with our citizens on World Environment Day; and **ACT** on the things we need to change.

**Here are some resources for city mayors, councils and municipalities to **LEARN** about how they can protect biodiversity:**

- These UNEP Guidelines explore ways to harness climate and resource potential for health and well-being at neighbourhood level  
[unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/new-neighborhood-creating-new-community-around-sustainability-and-social](https://unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/new-neighborhood-creating-new-community-around-sustainability-and-social)
- This UNEP report examines how cities can become sustainable and resource efficient as urban populations grow  
[sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1124SustainableResourceEfficientCities.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1124SustainableResourceEfficientCities.pdf)
- The [UNEP GEO Cities Report](#) provides local governments, scientists, policy-makers and the general public with reliable and up-to-date information on improving urban environmental planning and management
- This [UNEP report](#) shows how local governments and decisions can help improve the state of the global environment
- [The Cities and Biodiversity Outlook](#) summarizes how urbanization affects biodiversity and examines 10 ways cities can strengthen conservation and use natural resources more sustainably
- Consult these resources to learn how to protect land from degradation  
[catalogue.unccd.int/1210\\_UNCCD\\_SPI\\_2019\\_Report\\_1.2.pdf](https://catalogue.unccd.int/1210_UNCCD_SPI_2019_Report_1.2.pdf)  
[knowledge.unccd.int/drought-toolbox](https://knowledge.unccd.int/drought-toolbox)
- The [UN Habitat Guidelines](#) look at how to balance territorial development by enhancing urban-rural linkages
- CitiesWithNature, an initiative hosted by ICLEI, IUCN and The Nature Conservancy, is a shared platform for cities and their partners to engage and connect  
[citieswithnature.org/what-is-cities-withnature/](https://citieswithnature.org/what-is-cities-withnature/)
- The Nature of Cities initiative curates conversations about urban solutions to environmental challenges  
[www.thenatureofcities.com/](http://www.thenatureofcities.com/)
- Cities4Forests encourages cities to better connect, conserve, manage, and restore forests around them  
[cities4forests.com/](http://cities4forests.com/)
- Learn how to better integrate nature into urban life by consulting these resources:  
[citieswithnature.org/](https://citieswithnature.org/)  
[cbc.iclei.org/una-handbook-series/](https://cbc.iclei.org/una-handbook-series/)  
[cbc.iclei.org/value-nature-urban-life/](https://cbc.iclei.org/value-nature-urban-life/)

**Here are some ideas for how cities can **SHARE** the message on World Environment Day:**

- Join the [CitiesWithNature](#) initiative that recognizes and enhances the value of nature in and around cities
- Sign up to the [C40 Cities](#) Climate Leadership Group
- Announce a new “green area” to be created in your city
- Use social media accounts to highlight the native biodiversity that exists within your city and what is in danger of being lost unless measures are taken
- Send native plant seeds to citizens on World Environment Day that they can plant on their balcony or garden to encourage biodiversity
- Join the [Climate and Clean Air Coalition](#)
- Join the [Cool Coalition](#)
- Have the mayor host a virtual chat with citizens pertaining to questions about the environment in the city

- Announce new targets pertaining to nature and biodiversity

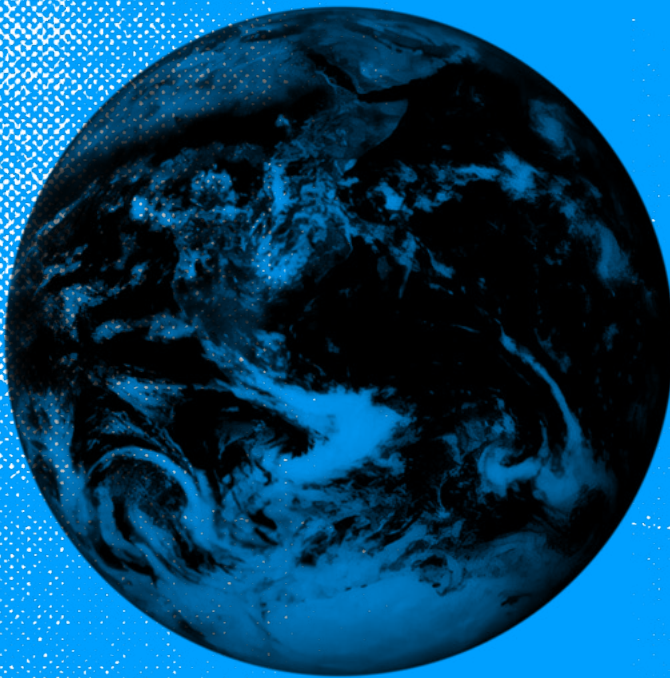
**Here's how cities can **ACT** for nature:**

- Adopt a “Whole-of-Government” approach, to allow a wide vision towards sustainable urban development
- Include nature-based solutions as part of your city climate strategy
- Develop combined transport and ecosystem corridors, naturally shading pedestrians and cyclists while connecting key green spaces in and around the city
- Set targets to protect and create green spaces in the city, and introduce innovative policies such as obligations to recreate as much green space as a real estate development is eating up
- Consider making living roofs and solar panels mandatory requirements in the specifications for tendering of affordable housing

- Create urban gardening opportunities for communities
- Produce a sustainable development report to be updated on a regular basis
- All cities, large and small, are invited to become part of a unique initiative that recognizes and enhances the value of nature in and around cities across the world. Join [Cities with Nature](#)
- Enlist urban planners to analyse how more trees can be planted in residential neighbourhoods and close to schools and hospitals
- If native watersheds were built over due to urban expansion, enlist planners to analyse whether they can be restored
- Allocate funds for biodiversity restoration in your annual budget
- In collaboration with scientists, find out what ecosystem services you could make use of in your city and protect or restore them



# WHAT CAN GOVERNMENTS DO?



**Strong and committed environmental policy is key to ending biodiversity loss and preserving nature for human wellbeing. Governments have a central role in changing our current destructive course towards one of greater custodianship for the natural world by protecting and safeguarding wild spaces with ambition and accountability. Biodiversity is necessary for a range of human rights, including the rights to life, health, food, water and culture. In order to protect human rights, States have an obligation to protect ecosystems and biodiversity. When we know more, we can do more. So, we must first **LEARN** about what we can do; **SHARE** that knowledge with citizens on World Environment Day; and **ACT** on the things we need to change.**

**Here are some resources for governments to **LEARN** about how they can incorporate biodiversity:**

- The Convention for Biological Diversity website outlines the biodiversity policies of countries  
[cbd.int/countries/](http://cbd.int/countries/)
- The Global Forests Resource Assessment provides essential information for understanding the extent of forest resources, their condition, management and uses  
[fao.org/forest-resources-assessment/en/](http://fao.org/forest-resources-assessment/en/)
- This is the homepage for the Sustainable Development Goals as part of the UN 2030 Agenda  
[sustainabledevelopment.un.org/](http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/)
- This guide examines how to protect biodiversity in the tropical forests in Asia  
[nap.edu/read/989/chapter/12#394](http://nap.edu/read/989/chapter/12#394)

- This UNEP factsheet outlines how states can mainstream biodiversity into government decision making  
[unenvironment.org/resources/factsheet/mainstreaming-biodiversity-information-heart-government-decision-making](http://unenvironment.org/resources/factsheet/mainstreaming-biodiversity-information-heart-government-decision-making)
- Learn more about the International Plant Protection Convention [here](#), see [this guide](#) for tips on how to communicate about the issue, and use this resource for social media assets.
- Read these reports on land use, land rights and related impact on the environment  
[catalogue.unccd.int/823\\_GLO\\_Full\\_Report\\_ENG.pdf](http://catalogue.unccd.int/823_GLO_Full_Report_ENG.pdf)  
[catalogue.unccd.int/825\\_Transformative\\_action\\_brochure%20GM.pdf](http://catalogue.unccd.int/825_Transformative_action_brochure%20GM.pdf)  
[catalogue.unccd.int/1210\\_UNCCD\\_SPI\\_2019\\_Report\\_1.2.pdf](http://catalogue.unccd.int/1210_UNCCD_SPI_2019_Report_1.2.pdf)
- This Convention on Biological Diversity report offers policy guidance for the integration of biodiversity and ecosystem services

- Learn about the [Sustainability, Stability, Security \(3S\)](#) and the [Great Green Wall](#) Initiatives

**Here are some ideas for how governments can **SHARE** their targets on World Environment Day:**

- Head to UNEP's social feeds from 28 May to 5 June and share with the world why action for nature is so critical. Be sure to use the #ForNature and #WorldEnvironmentDay hashtags
- Announce a national biodiversity initiative and specify how you will achieve it
- Have officials host a virtual chat on new conservation measures in light of COVID-19 and share clips widely
- Share interesting facts on social media and in speeches about biodiversity that exists within your country and what is in danger of being lost unless measures are taken
- Announce a ban on single-use plastics

- Announce strict new measures to protect marine areas/watersheds
- Publicize new measures to protect forests, national parks and biodiversity hotspots
- Start a national awareness campaign to get citizens educated about what biodiversity is and how to protect it in their everyday lives to help deliver AICHI Target 1

**Here's how governments can **ACT** for nature:**

- Put biodiversity conservation at the heart of decision making and at the top of the national agenda
- Restore degraded landscapes and provide subsidies and incentives that reward restoration and sustainable resource use

- Financial regulatory authorities should create and strengthen financial mechanisms (bonds, incentives) and regulatory frameworks (reporting or disclosure) to support the wider uptake and scaling of efforts by individual private sector actors on biodiversity preservation
- Engage with policymakers on wildlife corridors and conservation and provide a fund for action that is in line with what conservationist's estimate is needed to protect biodiversity
- Phase out the production of fossil fuels and invest in renewable energy, while translating fossil fuel workers' jobs into the renewable sector
- Phase out motor vehicles that are powered by diesel and petrol and commit to electric mobility targets
- Place protections on natural areas and ensure that heavy fines are enforced if they are not respected
- Boost the implementation and uptake of Strategic Environmental Impact Assessments

- After COVID-19, consider keeping in force hours in which cars and transport should not be in use to allow for wildlife to roam freely and to minimize noise and air pollution levels
- Work with UN agencies to promote sustainable development practices and meet targets such as the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals
- Mainstream Nature-based Solutions (NbS), while minimizing detrimental impacts of grey infrastructure projects on ecosystems and biological diversity
- Promote healthier and more sustainable diets and the global reduction of food waste
- Increase public investments in sustainable farming and agricultural landscape restoration to protect nature and enhance healthy food production
- Make natural resource management sustainable in the policy chain



# WHAT CAN SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS DO?



Schools and teachers have a critical role to play in nurturing young people's affinity for nature and building curricula that underscore the value of biodiversity and interest in future green job opportunities. If we are to change the current course of destruction to one of environmental custodianship, we must first **LEARN** about what we can do; **SHARE** that knowledge with our communities on World Environment Day; and **ACT** on the things we need to change.



**Here are some resources for school children to **LEARN** about how they can protect nature:**

- TE-Ed Earth School will help youth understand and celebrate our natural world, while learning about how dependent we are on our planet. This contains some of the best environmental lessons all under one roof [ed.ted.com/earth-school](http://ed.ted.com/earth-school)
- The World Wildlife Fund offers primary, secondary and university level educational resources on biodiversity [schools.wwf.ca/](http://schools.wwf.ca/)
- The World's Largest Lesson, narrated by United Nations Messenger of Peace Malala Yousafzai, introduces the Sustainable Development Goals to children and young people [vimeo.com/138852758](http://vimeo.com/138852758)
- The Convention for Biological Diversity has created a lesson plan for teachers [cbd.int/doc/bioday/2008/ibd-2008-framing-booklet-en.pdf](http://cbd.int/doc/bioday/2008/ibd-2008-framing-booklet-en.pdf)

- [The Nature Conservancy](#) is a global non-profit working to create a world where people and nature can thrive
- Learn more about the International Plant Protection Convention [here](#), see [this guide](#) for tips on how to communicate about the issue, and use [this resource](#) for social media assets
- [This education kit](#) will teach your students about combating desertification, while this one is about drylands
- IUCN's #NatureforAll [Discovery Zone](#) offers a range of creative tools – from videos to lesson plans, to comic books – to help you learn about nature

**Here are some ideas for how you can **SHARE** the message on World Environment Day:**

- Find the Earth School lesson you love the most and share it with your friends by using #EarthSchool and #ForNature as the hashtag

- Use art as a way to spread the message i.e. a virtual painting competition or exhibition or a music challenge
- Head to UNEP's social media feeds from 28 May to 5 June and share with the world why action for nature is so critical. Be sure to use the #ForNature and #WorldEnvironment-Day hashtags
- Tag a couple of people/organizations/companies in your reply and ask them to join the conversation
- CITIES4FORESTS has launched the Forest challenge. Join the photo contest and plant a tree [cities4forests.com/forest-challenge/](http://cities4forests.com/forest-challenge/)
- Schools can announce their commitment to phase out single-use plastic
- Post videos interviewing your family members about how they are making sure your home is using resources efficiently

**Here's how you can **ACT** for nature:**

- Encourage students to think through their average day and explain how much of the plastic they encounter – like straws and single-use water bottles – are more a matter of convenience than necessity. Describe how they can opt out of using single-use plastics
- Host a tree-planting event at school
- Create opportunities for young people to engage in nature-based-activities. Lead a monthly nature hike, organize sports activities outdoors and host walks to discover local flora and fauna
- Teach students how to make their voices heard through writing letters to local government demanding more protection for local biodiversity
- Encourage parents through educational school activities to recycle and to buy food with less packaging
- Encourage students to eat enough food so that they're satisfied but not wasteful
- Factor in a daily biodiversity lesson, in which you may teach students about an endangered species or one that is so magnificent it sparks their imagination on why wildlife is important
- Encourage children to think about consumerism and why it can be dangerous to our planet
- Teach about the opportunities that will come from green jobs

# WHAT CAN YOUTH AND YOUTH GROUPS DO?



Young people are the future, and the decisions made now will determine the kind of world you will inherit. Increasingly, you are making your voices heard with real impact. Young people have a role to play in preventing biodiversity loss and preserving nature for our future. If we are to change the course of destruction, we must first **LEARN** about what we can do; **SHARE** that knowledge with our communities on World Environment Day; and once it is safe to do so, **ACT** on the things we need to change.

**Here are some resources for youth to **LEARN** about how they can protect nature:**

- GEO 6 for youth boils down high-level, scientific messages on the state of the environment in terms young people will understand [unenvironment.org/resources/assessment/global-environment-outlook-6-youth](http://unenvironment.org/resources/assessment/global-environment-outlook-6-youth)
- Anatomy of Action maps out priority actions individuals can take to reduce their carbon footprint [anatomyofaction.org](http://anatomyofaction.org)
- Learn about endangered species trafficked in the illegal wildlife trade through UNEP's WildforLife campaign [wildfor.life/learn](http://wildfor.life/learn)
- UNEP Major Group for Children and Youth is a group of individuals and youth organizations that work towards environmental conservation and the representation of young people's voices in governance and conservation processes [www.youthenvironment.org/](http://www.youthenvironment.org/)
- This Youth XChange Training kit on responsible consumption [unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000158700/PDF/158700eng.pdf.multi](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000158700/PDF/158700eng.pdf.multi)
- The World Wildlife Fund offers primary, secondary and university level educational resources on biodiversity [campus.wwf.ca/](http://campus.wwf.ca/)
- TED-Ed Earth school helps youth understand and celebrate our natural world, while learning about how dependent we are on our planet. [ed.ted.com/earth-school](http://ed.ted.com/earth-school)
- Learn more about the International Plant Protection Convention [here](#), see [this guide](#) for tips on how to communicate about the issue, and use [this resource](#) for social media assets.
- Read these reports on land use, land rights and related impact on the environment [catalogue.unccd.int/823\\_GLO\\_Full\\_Report\\_ENG.pdf](http://catalogue.unccd.int/823_GLO_Full_Report_ENG.pdf) [catalogue.unccd.int/825\\_Transformative\\_action\\_brochure%20GM.pdf](http://catalogue.unccd.int/825_Transformative_action_brochure%20GM.pdf) [catalogue.unccd.int/1210\\_UNCCD\\_SPI\\_2019\\_Report\\_1.2.pdf](http://catalogue.unccd.int/1210_UNCCD_SPI_2019_Report_1.2.pdf)
- Learn about good land stewardship by consulting this podcast and this knowledge tool developed by the UN Convention to Combat Desertification
- Find out if your cosmetics and products contain harmful microbeads through the Beat the Microbead app [beatthemicrobead.org/download-the-beat-the-microbead-app-and-take-part-in-ocean-conservation/](http://beatthemicrobead.org/download-the-beat-the-microbead-app-and-take-part-in-ocean-conservation/)
- IUCN's #NatureforAll [Discovery Zone](#) offers a range of creative tools – from videos to lesson plans, to comic books – to help you learn about nature

**Here are some ideas for how youth groups can **SHARE** the message on World Environment Day:**

- Host a webinar or a live Q&A to discuss biodiversity and nature based-solutions
- Use art as a way to spread the message. Produce a podcast, video, virtual painting competition or a music challenge



- Head to UNEP's social media feeds from 28 May to 5 June and share with the world why action for nature is so critical. Be sure to use the #ForNature and #WorldEnvironmentDay hashtags.
- Tag a couple of people/organizations/companies in your reply and ask them to join the conversation.
- The World Resources Institute has launched the Forest Challenge. Join the photo contest and plant a tree [cities4forests.com/forest-challenge/](https://cities4forests.com/forest-challenge/)
- Be accurate in the information you share by ensuring you use reputable sources to counter misinformation
- Share info about the COVID-19 pandemic and how it relates to biodiversity loss to help counteract misinformation

**Here's how youth groups can **ACT** for nature:**

- Host a tree-planting event, community clean-up or eco-picnic
- Organize events street actions or marches to advocate for governments to reduce nature loss
- Demand from your leaders bold decisions and concrete actions to protect nature
- Shape future climate ambitions by presenting examples of youth participation in climate change policymaking
- Think about entering a career that is environmentally conscious
- Volunteer for local clean-ups
- Lead by taking actions to reduce waste and consume less

# WHAT CAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS DO?

As civil society we have a role to play in preventing biodiversity loss and preserving nature for our future. If we are to change the course of destruction, we must first **LEARN** about what we can do; **SHARE** that knowledge with our communities on World Environment Day; and once it is safe to do so, **ACT** on the things we need to change.

**Here are some resources for civil society to **LEARN** about how they can protect nature:**

- Learn about how you can help fight climate change through the United Nations' Act Now campaign [un.org/en/actnow/](https://un.org/en/actnow/)
- Learn about plastic pollution through UNEP's Clean Seas campaign and how that affects marine species [cleanseas.org/](https://cleanseas.org/)
- Find out about the endangered species that are trafficked in the illegal wildlife trade [wildfor.life/the-campaign](https://wildfor.life/the-campaign)
- Look into the Anatomy of Action, which maps out actions individuals can take to reduce their carbon footprint [anatomyofaction.org](https://anatomyofaction.org)
- Sign up for a free online course on nature-based solutions for disaster and climate resilience [pedrr.org/education-training-courses/massive-open-online-course-mooc-on-nature-based-solutions-for-disaster-and-climate-resilience/](https://pedrr.org/education-training-courses/massive-open-online-course-mooc-on-nature-based-solutions-for-disaster-and-climate-resilience/)

- Learn about the emissions-gap left for countries to limit the global temperature rise to 1.5°C [unenvironment.org/interactive/emissions-gap-report/2019/](https://unenvironment.org/interactive/emissions-gap-report/2019/)
- Learn more about the International Plant Protection Convention [here](#), see [this guide](#) for tips on how to communicate about the issue, and use [this resource](#) for social media assets
- TED-Ed Earth school helps youth understand and celebrate our natural world, while learning about how dependent we are on our planet [ed.ted.com/earth-school](https://ed.ted.com/earth-school)

**Here are some ideas for how civil society can **SHARE** the message on World Environment Day:**

- Head to UNEP's social feeds from 28 May to 5 June and share with the world why action for nature is so critical. Be sure to use the #ForNature and #WorldEnvironmentDay hashtags.

- Tag a couple of people/organizations/companies in your reply and ask them to join the conversation.
- The World Resources Institute has launched the Forest Challenge. Join the photo contest and plant a tree [cities4forests.com/forest-challenge/](https://cities4forests.com/forest-challenge/)
- Be accurate in the information you share by ensuring you use reputable sources to counter misinformation
- Organize a donation drive for an environmental cause in your area to which members can contribute
- Highlight changes to your place of operations that will make it more sustainable once in-person activities resume and encourage members to do the same
- Share info about the COVID-19 pandemic and how it relates to biodiversity loss to help counteract misinformation
- Pair up with a social enterprise that provides renewable energy for a discounted price for members and encourage them to sign-up

- Pair up with a local supermarket to collect expired food that you can then give for free to the needy
- Use art to spread the message, for example, by holding a virtual painting competition or exhibition or a music challenge.

**Here's how civil society groups can ACT for nature:**

- Distribute seeds of native plants to members during gatherings
- Separate waste and recycle solid waste by producing compost to be used as fertilizer
- Take part in negotiations and conferences convened by governments and international organizations on the environment
- Emphasize a need to “build back better” following COVID-19 with environment at the heart of decision making

- Mobilize followers to take collective actions to reduce waste and consume less
- Encourage healthy eating habits, including ways to reduce the consumption of meat and other unsustainable choices
- Enhance the concept of protected areas managed by organizations
- Encourage tree plantings at gatherings
- Demand from your leaders bold decisions and concrete actions to protect nature
- Present examples of civil society participation in climate change policymaking



## **YOUR FEEDBACK MATTERS**

**It will take the entire global community to counter biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation. We are grateful to you for helping us share the important messages contained in this package. We applaud the many who join us on World Environment Day and help reimagine our relationship with nature.**

**We'd like to ask for your feedback about this guide. Did you find it useful? Would you share it with others? What can we improve? Please contact us at [worldenvironmentday@un.org](mailto:worldenvironmentday@un.org)**

**Thank you from everyone at UNEP.**



**WORLD  
ENVIRONMENT  
DAY**

