

Children and Young People's Assembly on Biodiversity Loss

Our Vision

An Ireland where we are connected to, and care for, the rights of nature (and each other) so that biodiversity is restored and protected and we live and grow up in healthy, clean and fair environments.

Our Key Messages

1 We must treat the earth like a member of the family or a friend.

2 Future generations must live in a world where there isn't a biodiversity crisis and where children don't have to take action because of the inaction of past generations.

3 Every decision must take biodiversity into account.

4 Children and young people must be included in decisions being made about biodiversity.

5 Biodiversity protection must be a shared responsibility and a global, collaborative effort.

6 We must consume resources in a sustainable, moderate way that neither diminishes the environment / biodiversity or our rights, wellbeing and livelihoods.



Education and Raising Awareness

To provide education for children, young people and adults that raises awareness and helps them to understand biodiversity loss, the consequences of our actions, and the things we can do to address this issue.

1. Make biodiversity and climate education mandatory for children and young people at every level. This would include learning about:
 - Biodiversity loss and climate change
 - Invasive species
 - Habitat loss
 - Economics and politics e.g. circular economy, doughnut economics
 - Skills such as sewing (to repair clothes) and growing vegetables
 - Overpopulation, overconsumption and overexploitation
 - Species protection
2. Provide biodiversity education outside of schools (i.e. community learning, on TV, social media, cartoons, comedy, podcasts) for people of all ages.
3. Fund local community action groups for biodiversity so people can learn, share ideas and inspire and encourage others to take action.
4. Provide education to farmers on how to farm in a way that protects and restores biodiversity, including encouraging a variety of methods for farming (e.g. diversified farming, no monocultures).
5. Help farmers to become community leaders to inform and inspire other farmers to make changes needed to value, protect and restore biodiversity.
6. Make sure the media gives the same amount of coverage to biodiversity news as to economic and business news. Media coverage should include details and numbers (in a similar way to the COVID-19 pandemic reporting) and less negative portrayals of animals (e.g. sharks).



Governance

To put biodiversity and the rights of nature at the heart of the decisions that we make.

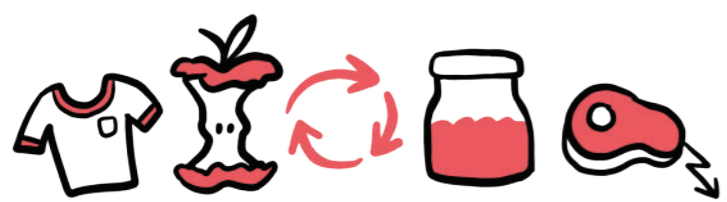
7. Every decision being made must consider biodiversity and the rights of nature.
8. Involve children and young people in decision-making so that more children and young people are given the chance to speak about climate change and biodiversity.
9. Enforce existing environmental protection laws by putting more money into enforcement (as existing incentives haven't been successful).
10. Make sure businesses and industries have regulations so they work in green ways.
11. Give incentives to people to persuade them to make changes, especially farmers, business people, and companies.
12. Put lower prices on stuff we really need and put higher prices on stuff we want but don't necessarily need.
13. Put a tax on expansion into biodiversity rich areas (i.e. it should be more expensive to carry out development work/building in biodiversity rich areas).
14. Invest in conservation efforts, species protection and environmental causes, and give funding to environmental charities.
15. Set up a permanent Children and Young People's Assembly on Biodiversity Loss, and make sure this Assembly's Calls to Action are carried out and not just forgotten.



Energy & Transport

To create energy and transport systems which limit our impact on the environment and biodiversity, and make the most of opportunities for protecting and restoring biodiversity.

16. Turn Ireland's energy green by:
 - Cutting out non-renewable forms of energy (i.e. ban coal, peat and oil)
 - Investing in research into new green energy sources, technologies and generators
 - Increasing wind turbines - every house should have a wind turbine!
 - Using kinetic energy in busy places to power electrical needs nearby e.g. kinetic energy generated from both people walking and vehicles driving in towns and cities could provide electricity to homes and businesses
 - Providing support and funding for people to install solar panels in their house.
17. Improve public transport so that it is good enough to be the preferred option for people. This would include:
 - Making it cheaper
 - Expanding tram and train networks outside of Dublin
 - Replacing parts of the existing road network with trams and trains, and rewinding redundant roads
 - Encouraging one car per household
 - Encouraging car sharing
18. Reduce use of fossil fuels and CO2 emissions by:
 - Stopping production of new diesel and petrol cars and making the sale of existing diesel and petrol cars more expensive
 - Encouraging the sale and use of affordable electric cars
 - Creating more bike lanes and footpaths
 - Lowering the number of petrol stations and factories that use fossil fuels
19. Reduce the need for mining through improved recycling and reusing materials (e.g. electric car batteries) so that environments and habitats are protected from being destroyed.



Waste & Consumption

To limit the impact of things we buy and use on the environment and biodiversity. To support sustainable ways of living which do not contribute to biodiversity loss, and help to promote biodiversity.

20. Ban single-use plastic.
21. Make shops and businesses take back and correctly dispose of their waste by law.
22. Create refill stations across Ireland (i.e. refilleries/eco-shops for food and other products).
23. Reduce clothes waste and fast-fashion.
24. Create more specified recycling systems.
25. Stop sewage pollution.
26. Stop pollution of all waters (i.e. rivers, lakes, oceans).
27. Reduce meat consumption by:
 - Introducing a meat tax
 - Stopping the slaughtering of animals unless we really need it
 - Creating more farms for producing vegetables rather than for feeding animals
28. Encourage people to grow more vegetables for themselves.
29. Encourage plant-based food / vegetarian diets.
30. Reduce food waste by educating people and companies about how they can do this, and repurposing food waste into sources of energy.
31. If building new homes, build upwards, not outwards. Otherwise, use current housing stock and fix derelict, abandoned buildings for people to live in.
32. Make sustainable living more affordable and therefore more achievable.

58 actions

Our Calls to Action

under 7 themes



Restoring & Rewilding

To restore and rewild environments which support our biodiversity, including urban and rural places, and develop national parks with the people who might work in these places.

33. Make more national parks, nature reserves, protected areas and safe spaces (a mix of private and public spaces) for animals and different habitats by:
 - Creating more policies for protecting and restoring biodiversity
 - Giving more land to biodiversity
 - Offering to pay people money to encourage them to turn private land into national parks
 - Giving benefits to landowners and farmers to take action on their land to encourage biodiversity
 - Making biodiversity the main focus of all tidy towns groups instead of tidiness
34. Restore and reintroduce native species including trees, plants, flowers and predators (e.g. wolves).
35. Make more green spaces in cities and urban areas.
36. Fund more rangers, forest keepers and other green jobs.
37. Give money and support to people who might lose their jobs so they can find green jobs.
38. When developing new buildings, don't disturb rivers - protect their natural movement.
39. Reforest Ireland! Every time someone is born, a tree should be planted so over time we will have forests full and protected for nature.
40. Cut down fewer trees and find new materials to replace paper.
41. Increase the number of deciduous plantations in Ireland.
42. Prevent deliberate and accidental forest fires.



Habitat and Species Protection

To protect our habitats and native species from the impact of invasive species and land use change.

43. Control and manage invasive species by:
 - Not bringing them into Ireland
 - Inspecting goods being shipped to Ireland
 - Paying people to locate invasive species
 - Trapping and releasing to a 'new habitat' (i.e. an animal sanctuary)
 - Introducing and enforcing fines for bringing them in (fines proportional to wealth)
 - Using camera traps to detect invasive species
 - Raising awareness/telling people about them (through multiple channels - podcasts, social media, comedy)
 - Making them illegal
 - Telling people not to release them
 - Telling people if you see them
44. Prevent people from disturbing bogs, wildlife and animals in their natural habitat.
45. Create more hedgerows and ditches by providing incentives/rewards for reducing hedge/grass cutting and rewilding hedgerows.
46. Create a network of wildlife corridors, paths, tunnels and bridges across Ireland.
47. Make cats wear bells (to alert birds to their presence).
48. Stop hunting endangered species and birds in the wild.
49. Create a penalty point system to stop further destruction of habitat loss. The more points you get, the more severe the penalties become e.g. if a company is illegally dumping, some of their assets (like properties) should be seized.



Overexploitation

To address biodiversity loss caused by overexploitation. To make sure places where we grow and gather our food are places where biodiversity can thrive, and the people who work in these places are helped to tackle biodiversity loss.

50. Stop the use of harmful chemicals and pesticides. This would include:
 - Preventing people from spraying plants with pesticides and chemicals
 - Making sure farmers do not spread chemicals on the roads
51. Support farmers to grow organic because they are better for the environment and our health.
52. Provide greater incentives to reduce methane.
53. Enforce regulations and quotas on hunting/exploitation of certain types of species (endangered/protected species). Fine people if they break the quota.
54. Reduce overgrazing to limit impacts on grassland habitats. Provide schemes, subsidies and support to farmers so they don't have to overexploit in the first place.
55. Give farmers money to support them to make the changes needed.
56. Place limits on people for doing different things during different seasons e.g. hunting, farming, fishing.
57. Halve the size of the national cow herd.
58. Stop overfishing through having restrictions, quotas and regulations on fishing practices (only ethically-caught fish).