

Biodiversity & Nature

Sustainability Audit

This guide will help you actively observe your surroundings by zooming in on Biodiversity and Nature at your school grounds. Go out, explore, identify and start your Eco-School actions!



EXPLORE BIODIVERSITY & NATURE WITH ECO-SCHOOLS

Biodiversity keeps Earth's ecosystems healthy and in balance. All living things depend on one another to form habitats, regulate climate, and support life. Today, many human activities are harming these systems, while Indigenous knowledge shows ways to live in balance with nature. Through this theme, Eco-Schools explore keystone species, native plants, and threats to biodiversity locally and globally, and take action to protect and restore ecosystems in their own schools and communities.



Your Eco-Committee can choose to focus on the theme Biodiversity and Nature, or explore several themes at once. Forming sub-groups within the committee ensures continuity, with each group taking long-term responsibility for a specific theme and developing expertise over time. Use the Eco-Schools Seven Steps to explore and weave the theme throughout every part of your school.

SOME QUESTIONS TO GET YOU STARTED...

Identifying native and introduced local species

- What species of plants and animals are native to our local area? How do these species help maintain balance?
- Are there any local plants and animals (introduced species) that should not be here?

Local Ecosystems Surrounding Our School

- What local practices support the ecosystems around our school?
- How would you describe the key ecosystems in the area surrounding the school? Do you think they are healthy?

Factors Affecting Species Survival

- What actions are being taken to protect species from local threats?
- How do environmental or human factors (e.g. hunting, pollution, habitat loss) affect species survival in our area?



Challenge assumptions, slow down, and really observe your surroundings. Your school has its own unique challenges and solutions that only sharp, curious minds will discover. Record what you see - notes, sketches, photos, or simple counts - at different times and seasons.

Ask critical questions: *What's here? What's missing? Why is it like this? What could change?* Use these insights to understand the current situation and move towards high-impact actions for Biodiversity & Nature at your school.



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Questions	Your Answers	Reflections/Observations
Spaces		
Map out the school grounds and estimate how many areas are concrete (such as paths, playgrounds, or parking spaces) versus green areas (such as grass, gardens, or trees).		
Can you walk across a green area? Count your steps and measure the area in m ² /sq. ft. Could you compare this area to something easily recognisable? (e.g., "as big as a swimming pool!")		
How many outdoor spaces that are used during lessons does your school have?		
What type of green areas does your school have? (gardens with native plants, green roofs, allotments, vertical gardens, drought-resilient areas...)		
Plants		
Are there a variety of native plants in your school? How many can be found?		
Have you noticed any invasive or non-native plants? If yes, count the invasive plants found in and around your school.		
Has your school removed any native plants?		
Has your school removed any invasive plants?		
What kinds of planting projects have been done in the school?		



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Questions	Your Answers	Reflections/Observations
Animals & Insects		
Is there a variety of native animals and insects in your school? If yes, how many can you find in and around your school?		
Have you noticed any invasive or non-native animals/insects? If yes, count the invasive animals found in and around your school.		
Is there a pond or small water source for animals? If yes, how many kinds of animals have you seen using it?		
Does your school or grounds nearby have places where insects and/or bugs can live? If yes, how many?		
Does your school provide food/nest boxes for birds? If yes, tick which ones you've spotted: <input type="checkbox"/> Bird boxes <input type="checkbox"/> Bird feeders <input type="checkbox"/> Bird baths <input type="checkbox"/> Perching posts <input type="checkbox"/> Berry and nut-bearing trees		
Have you spotted any migratory birds in your area? If so, which ones?		
Threats		
Are there any animals or plants in your area endangered? If yes, make a "watchlist" of the ones that need protection. Why are they at risk?		
Is there any area close to your school that needs protection and/or restoration?		

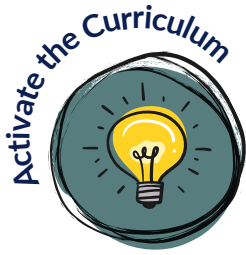


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Questions	Your Answers	Reflections/Observations
Community		
Have you spoken to a local elder about how the local environment has changed over the years? If yes, what was the most interesting or surprising thing they shared?		
Does your school organise or participate in any nature clean ups/walks?		
Have you noticed who takes care of the green areas in and around your school? If so, who?		
Has your school been involved in any volunteering or community action projects related to plants and animals? If yes, how many and what were they about?		
Your questions		

Choosing *Biodiversity & Nature* as a key theme for action?

Follow these next Eco-Schools steps...



What knowledge or skills do you still need to start putting your ideas into action? Take some time to identify what's missing and discuss it within your Eco-Committee. Then, reach out to your teachers and tell them what you'd like to learn more about, whether it's local species, ecosystems, or practical ways to protect biodiversity around your school. Together, you can build the knowledge and confidence needed to start real change!



Use what you've learned from your lessons, your Eco-Schools activities, and your own observations, to take action! Work together to turn your ideas into real change by creating an Action Plan for Biodiversity & Nature. Mobilise your Eco-Committee, teachers, school staff, parents, and the wider community to help you reach your goals. You could:



create/maintain natural habitats



support a special native species



create/install ponds



create/install animal feeders

Whatever actions you choose, make sure they are realistic, measurable, and long-lasting, so your Eco-Committee's work continues to grow year after year.



Monitor your actions to see the difference you have made! Use your Action Plan to check what's changed in your school and community. Have you spotted more plants or animals? Are more people aware of biodiversity? You could compare before-and-after photos, count species, or note how many people joined your activities. Measuring your impact helps you celebrate success and plan even better actions for the future!



Make sure the whole school and local community are part of your Biodiversity & Nature journey. Share your findings and actions through assemblies, newsletters, posters, or social media. Invite teachers, students, parents, and local experts to join activities or share their knowledge. By including different perspectives and experiences, your Eco-Committee will build stronger, more creative solutions that last.