

Berlin, 17 March 2023

Press release

Think global – act local

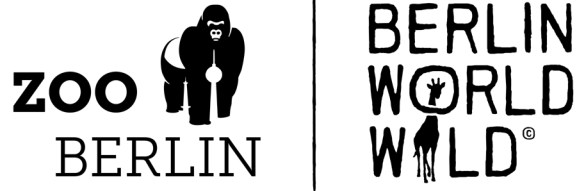
Zoo Berlin becomes an actor with the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration | Call for entries for the Biodiversity Prize

A healthy natural world is the basis for all life on Earth. It ensures clean air and water, regulates the climate, enhances wellbeing, and provides an abundance of food for all the planet's inhabitants. With its Decade on Ecosystem Restoration from 2021 to 2030, the UN is calling for increased efforts to revitalise essential ecosystems. Zoo Berlin is now proud to announce that it is an official actor with the UN Decade. As such, it is calling on the children and young people of Berlin to participate in this year's Biodiversity Prize as part of #GenerationRestoration – a youth programme supporting global ecosystem restoration efforts.

“When the first green shoots emerge and the weather starts to get warmer, we Berliners notice what we have been missing over the winter months,” says Zoo and Tierpark Director Dr Andreas Knieriem. “Our urban nature not only contributes to a healthier climate and offers many animal species a home, it actually enhances the physical and mental wellbeing of the people who live here.” No other German city has as many wild animals as Berlin: 133 different bird species live among the trees, bushes and buildings, and the capital's green oases also provide important habitats for mammals like the house marten and amphibians like the European green toad.

Under the motto “Back to Nature!”, the Zoo and Tierpark Berlin conservation programme Berlin World Wild is calling for project ideas for enhancing and preserving biodiversity in the city. The programme is sponsored by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment and inspired by the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. The Biodiversity Prize encourages children and young people to get involved at local level by devising and implementing their own environmental projects – be that an outdoor classroom surrounded by flower beds, an educational nature trail, or a little bee paradise in the middle of the schoolyard. Endowed with a total of €15,000, the prize serves to motivate local commitment and fund implementation of the winning projects. “I would like to let Berlin's children and young people know that we are very much looking forward to receiving their submissions and seeing their ideas,” says Knieriem.

Projects that have already been launched can also enter, provided that the prize money can be used for the further development of the project idea. Primary school children can submit their project proposals as a colourful poster, while secondary school children can give a presentation or submit an audiovisual entry. Submissions will not be published without the explicit permission of participants. A jury will select four winning groups who will be invited to



attend the awards ceremony at the Tierpark School's nature trail. For further information visit: www.tierpark-berlin.de/artenschutzpreis

The #GenerationRestoration global movement

The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2021 to 2030 the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. The goal is to stop global species extinction and restore ecosystems – thus protecting basic functions of nature such as regulation of temperature and the water cycle, air purification, food production, flood protection, and the provision of natural spaces for rest and recreation. “By planting trees, cleaning up riverbanks, or simply giving nature space to recover, we can bring damaged ecosystems back to life,” says Jean-Philippe Salcedo, Programme Management Officer of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. “This is an important prerequisite for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the targets set out in the Paris Agreement. We are delighted that Zoo Berlin has joined this important initiative.”

As an official actor with the UN Decade, Zoo and Tierpark Berlin want to raise awareness of the destruction of ecosystems and motivate young people to help protect and restore natural habitats. The Zoo and Tierpark are expanding their efforts to protect wild animals – for example, by launching a European hamster conservation project right here in Germany. To learn more about the UN Decade, visit: www.undekade-restoration.de.