

Introduction

Large-scale action is needed from governments to address the threats facing the natural world, but we often underestimate the value of our own individual voice and actions. Your voice can go a long way in raising the profile of these issues. Your actions can have an important impact on the wellbeing of natural spaces in your local area.

Here are the nine key things you can do.

Be a voice for nature

Reach out to those who have the power to make larger changes to protect nature, such as your MP, local councillors, and businesses. Let them know you care about this issue.

Talk to your employer, school, or university about being more friendly to nature.

Did you make a nature-friendly lifestyle change? Share your experience with friends, family, colleagues and classmates.

Make your home a haven for native plants and wildlife

Become a green gardener by using peat-free compost and natural fertilisers and pesticides. Plant native species and assist local pollinators. Support local wildlife around your home by setting up bee hotels, bird boxes, ponds and green roofs.

No access to a garden? Get some potted plants for inside your home or balcony. Or join a community gardening project in your local area.

Respect and protect natural spaces beyond your home

Protect local ecosystems by visiting green spaces and getting your hands dirty!

Get involved with local grassroots organisations and conservation groups. This is also an opportunity to connect with others and improve your mental health. Participate in a local litter clean-up (or organise your own) or join a tree planting project near you.

Take care when enjoying outdoor spaces - 'take only photos, leave only tracks.'



Eat a nature-friendly diet

Raising livestock is a major cause of deforestation worldwide while overfishing is behind the decline of many ocean species. Choosing plant-based alternatives to meat, fish, and dairy is one of the most effective ways to reduce your impact on the natural world. It's also good for your health.

Help reduce food waste by only buying what you need and choose local, in-season foods where possible.

Remember the three R's

Avoid waste by cutting the amount of items that get produced and thrown away. Follow the three Rs: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.

Reduce waste and save money by repairing and maintaining items so you can use them for as long as possible. Share rarely used items, such as DIY equipment, with friends and family.

Reuse items where you can, such as cups and straws. Donate old items to charity shops so they can be reused by others.

Recycle as much as possible. If you find recyclable products that cannot be recycled in your area, contact your local council to ask if things can be improved.



Consume less, and shop sustainably

Keep nature in mind when you need to look for new items. Consider second-hand options and, where you can, opt for higher quality items made to last.

Choose household and personal care products that use naturally-derived ingredients if possible, and try to avoid products with excess packaging.

Another way to become a more sustainable consumer is to invest your money responsibly. Ask your bank or pension fund if you can opt out of funds that are destructive to nature, and to invest in nature-friendly portfolios.

Find out more about what you can do to protect the natural world:

www.imperial.ac.uk/stories/protecting-nature

Save water

Human activity puts a major strain on the world's fresh water supply, but there are a lot of simple things you can do to preserve it. Take shorter showers, turn off the tap when not in use, ensure a full load of clothes before running the washing machine and a full load of dishes before running the dishwasher.

Be a nature-friendly tourist

Tourism affects local ecosystems and wildlife. When you decide to go on holiday, choose nature-friendly transportation, accommodation, and activities. Look for activities that minimise impact on nature and wildlife - instead of a motorboat or jet ski, use a kayak, or canoe.

Consider visiting a rewilding site for your holiday. They often have options for visitors, including tours and camping facilities, designed with nature in mind.

Learn more about protecting nature – knowledge is power!

The more you know about the natural world, and the threats it faces, the more you can help. Take initiative to learn more about habitats and ecosystems, and what you can do to protect them.

Take up a nature-friendly hobby such as bird-watching, or visit a nature-themed museum or outdoor centre. Seek out online resources such as the Grantham Institute's free online events.

9 things you can do to protect the natural world