

# Protect Our Species

---

Earth Day 2019



Cities & Local Leaders



EARTH DAY NETWORK

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Make Your City Biodiversity Friendly	4
Global Day of Conversation Roundtable	7
Proclamation	8
Sample Media Tools: Talking Points for Earth Day 2019	9
Sample Media Tools: Press Release	10
Sample Media Tools: Letter to the Editor	11
Sample Media Tools: Social Media	11
Additional Resources	12
About Earth Day Network	13
Contact Information	13

---

**Produced by Earth Day Network for the Protect Our Species Campaign, 2019**

Copyright © 2019 by Earth Day Network all rights reserved. This toolkit was last updated March 20, 2019.  
For more information, email [cities@earthday.org](mailto:cities@earthday.org)

Designed and prepared by Sebastian Rosemont, Valeria Merino, David Ayer, Basem Hassan, Cam Wejnert-Depue.

This Toolkit can be copied and disseminated for free as long as the format is not changed, and Earth Day Network is cited or given credit.



# EARTH DAY 2019 - PROTECT OUR SPECIES

is an opportunity for local governments to engage constituents in a constructive dialogue about protecting biodiversity locally.

## CONTENTS OF THIS TOOLKIT

- 1 Biodiversity Protection In Your City
- 2 Global Day of Conversation Roundtable
- 3 Proclamation
- 4 Communications Campaign - Sample Media Tools

## MORE INFORMATION

- [Earth Day In A Box](#)
- [History of Earth Day](#)
- [What is Earth Day?](#)
- [Earth Day 2020 The 50th Anniversary](#)
- [Protect Our Species Primer & Action Toolkit](#)

Many of the world's most challenging environmental issues require solutions informed by the local circumstances of each community. Earth Day 2019 provides a forum for government officials to communicate the importance of protecting all species by creating spaces and executing plans that allow species to live and thrive in urban areas.

This year, Earth Day Network is encouraging municipal leaders to Protect Our Species:

1

Make your City Biodiversity Friendly

2

Host roundtable discussions around the Earth Day 2019 theme: [Protect Our Species](#)

3

Issue a proclamation that designates April 22, 2019 as "Earth Day" and outlines the importance of protecting our species

4

Implement a Communications Campaign to highlight the plans of your city to Protect Our Species

Additionally, constituents in your community may be organizing an event for Earth Day. Municipal participation in these community events focused on protecting all species is an excellent way to further communicate support for local environmental protection.

This toolkit contains all the materials for municipal leaders and cities to participate in Earth Day 2019, including a draft proclamation. The toolkit also contains sample media tools to help communicate an environmental message to constituents.

Thank you for joining Earth Day Network to showcase the work being done locally to inspire civic action to advance species conservation.



# MAKE YOUR CITY BIODIVERSITY FRIENDLY

The Theme of Earth Day 2019 (April 22) is Protect Our Species!

---

Cities play a critical role in protecting biodiversity and educating the public about the importance of species and biodiversity in regard to community health and well-being.

## COMMUNITY IMPACT

**Trees** reduce air pollution and offset emissions, helping cities meet the goals of the Paris Agreement. Trees also reduce the heat island effect.

**Community gardens and urban farms** feed cities, and waterfront parks increase cities' resiliency to flooding, rising sea levels and the effects of climate change.

**Green spaces** also greatly benefit community health by providing opportunities for outdoor activities and have a measurably positive impact on psychological well-being.

Cities are growing at a rapid pace; by 2050 two thirds of the world's population will live in urban areas. Increasing urbanization without responsible stewardship is a threat to local [flora and fauna](#). However, [these challenges](#) offer an opportunity to change our approach to urban living, to embrace the biodiversity that is an essential part of city living so that communities and species can thrive in unity. Cities around the world are leading the way and developing innovative plans to expand and protect urban ecosystems. Local governments have a wide array of options available to implement species and biodiversity protection plans. These include ordinances, citywide strategies, public outreach, and education campaigns.

Comprehensive citywide biodiversity and green infrastructure plans, making ecosystem health and growth a key aspect of all city planning, will be essential for protecting our species in the decades to come. For cities without comprehensive plans in place or in development, there are many components of these plans that can be implemented individually and have a major impact.

Communicating the importance of these plans to the public is also vital for their success. Plans aimed at protecting biodiversity and creating green spaces have positive effects for the entire community.



In 2019, Earth Day offers an opportunity and a platform for cities to amplify actions and initiatives that focus on urban biodiversity, and launch new ones depending on their legal capacity to do so. The initiatives can be divided into two categories: local government action and public engagement and education. The next two pages contain examples of initiatives for your city to consider.

## CITY INITIATIVES TO CONSIDER

### Citywide Biodiversity Plan

- [Barcelona, Spain](#)
- [London, UK](#)
- [Melbourne, Australia](#)
- [Santiago, Chile](#)  
*(in Spanish)*

Comprehensive biodiversity plans incorporate species protection, green space conservation and creation, green infrastructure development, water resource management and conservation, and other initiatives. A key component is the development of partnerships between the city, nonprofit, and business communities to jointly craft and implement these plans and education of the community.

### Pollinator Protection Plan

- [Toronto, ON, Canada](#)
- [Washington, DC, USA](#)

Pollinator protection plans prioritize native pollinator species, such as bees and butterflies, while also incorporating guidelines for urban beekeeping. Planting native plant species, creating habitat, and properly maintaining public lands allow pollinators to thrive. Guidelines and education campaigns can also teach the public how to grow pollinator-friendly gardens and maintain their property in non-harmful ways.

### Green Infrastructure & Green Space Creation

- [Berlin, Germany](#)
- [Boston, MA, USA](#)

- Green infrastructure and green spaces can include parks, trails, gardens, urban farms, waterfront revitalization, and green roofs. Planting native species should be a priority for all green space projects as they are best suited to host and feed native wildlife.
- Urban forest programs and vacant lot conversion projects are also initiatives that have key benefits for both ecosystem and community health.
- Green corridor plans enable the movement of species throughout the city and to surrounding areas by linking together green spaces. These links can be green roofs, tree- and plant-lined streets, and new parks or gardens.
- Communities and the private sector can get engaged by partnering with the city on specific projects or by following city guidelines when developing or renovating privately-owned land and buildings.

### Water Resources Protection Strategies

- [New York City, NY, USA](#)
- [Mexico City, Mexico](#)  
*(in Spanish)*

Water management and protection is a major factor in community health. Healthy, clean water resources lead to healthy ecosystems and people. Water resource protection is closely linked with green spaces and parks, which can help mitigate the effects of runoff and erosion after rain.



### Bird Conservation Strategies

- [San Francisco, CA, USA](#)
- [Biophilic Cities Codes](#)

Birds are some of the most noticeable wildlife in cities, yet they face a number of threats and have seen their populations declining. Cities can take steps to protect bird populations by encouraging owners of domestic cats to keep them indoors, managing populations of feral cats, and most importantly, implementing guidelines or ordinances for windows to avoid collisions. Biophilic Cities offers resources for sample ordinances for protecting birds in cities.

---

### Urban Wildlife Studies and/or Database of Local Species Abundance & Habitat Areas

- [Singapore's City Biodiversity Index manual](#)

Developing a baseline of the health of local ecosystems is necessary for tracking species population health year over year and the success of city initiatives. These projects also offer many options for engaging the public, universities, and schools. Cities can support citizen science projects, such as ones focused on birds and special atlasings, as an effective way to gather data.

---

### Guidelines for Procurement of Goods & Services By City with regards to contracts granted by City to maintain public areas

- [Portland, OR, USA](#)
- [Seattle, WA, USA](#)

- While local governments may be limited in legislating against harmful practices and use of chemicals, standards and priorities with an aim to protect species and prioritize native plants can be set for all city contractors to follow.
- Guidelines can also be distributed and promoted to the public to educate them about best-practices for their yards and gardens.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

### Educating the Community and Providing Opportunities for Action

- Launch a public outreach and education campaign about the importance of conservation efforts for native species and biodiversity. Education materials should also include the dangers of invasive species and the costs the city incurs in managing them.
- Publish and promote guidelines for individuals on how to protect and help biodiversity thrive in their yards, around their buildings, and in their neighborhoods. For example, the National Wildlife Federation offers resources and a Wildlife Habitat Certification.
- Partner with communities to convert vacant lots and buildings into green, productive spaces including community gardens, education or sustainability-minded community centers, and urban farms.
- Engage food-vendors, restaurants, health-care provider, and communities on the connections between intensive agriculture practices and biodiversity loss. Pledging to go Meatless on Mondays is a fun way to start this conversation; it allows for community participation, and supports positive individual changes to protect species and their habitats.

For more information  
and additional examples  
of cities taking action in  
the above areas please visit:

[Earth Day 2019 Cities](#)



# GLOBAL DAY OF CONVERSATION ROUNDTABLE

---

Global Day of Conversation roundtables should bring together relevant influencers, experts, and stakeholders from all corners of your community.

Sample attendees in addition to the leadership could include:



**Representatives  
from City Hall**



**City Council Members**



**Local Environmentalists**



**Local Nonprofits & Businesses**  
interested in species conservation, management  
of green spaces, or tree planting



**Biology Teachers**



**Members of the Local Media**

---

Each Roundtable should discuss important topics surrounding the Earth Day 2019 theme: Protect Our Species. The goal is to shed light on how species are managed and protected in the city, share future plans for improving the status quo, and strategies for how to get the community involved.

Sample agenda topics could include:

1

The status of species  
conservation in the city

2

The current infrastructure  
in place and resources for  
fostering biodiversity in  
the city

3

How the community can  
collectively reduce its  
impact on biodiversity

Join our campaign by  
registering your city below.  
Proclamations can be sent to  
[cities@earthday.org](mailto:cities@earthday.org)

[earthday.org/registeryourcity](http://earthday.org/registeryourcity)



To capitalize on the momentum surrounding Earth Day 2019, schedule your events as close to April 22, 2019 as possible. If Earth Day is not possible, consider the week before or after.



# PROCLAMATION

---

(INSERT COMMUNITY NAME)

**WHEREAS**, all species play a unique role in the complex web of life and contribute to the ecosystem services on which all life on Earth depends, and hence, protecting our species is crucial to the survival of this planet and its inhabitants; and

**WHEREAS**, wild animal populations have declined on average by more than half and the Earth is facing an era of mass extinction; and

**WHEREAS**, the loss of species is for the most part a result of human activity, including degradation of ecosystems, deforestation, pollution, and climate change; and

**WHEREAS**, by 2050, between 60-70% of all people will live in cities and species provide important services to city dwellers such as generating oxygen and purifying the air; controlling other animals considered pests or that spread disease; pollinating plants and crops; providing recreation opportunities and well-being, etc.; and

**WHEREAS**, many plants, wild animals, and pollinators live in urbanized landscapes, and cities thereby have a responsibility to examine the ecological impacts of expanding urban areas and how to protect biodiversity; and

**WHEREAS**, it is understood that sustainability will only be achieved by meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations; and

**WHEREAS**, it is more important than ever to cooperate locally and internationally to defend the environmental progress that has been heretofore gained; and

**WHEREAS**, it is essential to expand and diversify the global environmental movement to achieve maximum progress; and

**WHEREAS**, Earth Day is an annual reminder of the constant need for environmental activism, stewardship commitments and sustainability efforts;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, (mayor's name) Mayor of (city name) have the distinct honor of proclaiming April 22, 2019 as

## EARTH DAY

throughout (city name) and encourage all of its citizens, businesses, and institutions to use EARTH DAY to celebrate the Earth and promote the protection of our species.



# Talking Points for Earth Day 2019

## HISTORY OF EARTH DAY

- Earth Day was founded in 1970 and included environmental teach-ins that educated Americans about environmental and species conservation issues, and connected those issues to their health and well-being.
- On April 22, 1970, 20 million Americans took to the streets, parks, and auditoriums to call for a healthy, sustainable environment in massive coast-to-coast rallies. Thousands of colleges and universities organized demonstrations and teach-ins against the deterioration of the environment.
- Earth Day 1970 activated a bipartisan spirit that motivated the passing of the Clean Air, Clean Water, and Endangered Species Acts. Many other groundbreaking environmental laws soon followed.

## PROTECTING SPECIES AND FOSTERING BIODIVERSITY IN CITIES

- The Earth Day theme for 2019: [Protect Our Species](#)
- Earth Day is an opportunity for local government officials and cities worldwide to engage their constituents in a constructive dialogue about issues related to the environment and how to foster biodiversity and species conservation in their communities.
- City governments are fundamental to implementing international environmental agreements, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity. Even though many cities are not directly involved in the negotiation of international agreements, most of those agreements are in fact implemented at the city level. The importance of city governance to tackle the challenges of biodiversity loss has increased as urban populations have grown enormously in the last decades, particularly in developing countries. The way cities are designed, planned, and governed influences the magnitude of their direct and indirect impacts on biodiversity.
- Our earth is [losing species](#) at a fast pace. [See here for more information](#) about the problem.
- We must also increase environmental awareness through effective policies and environmental education-based curricula. This starts in our cities. Everyone must join the conversation to Protect Our Species and create a community where humans and wildlife thrive together.

# Example of Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT:**

Name  
Number  
Email

## **NAME PROCLAIMS APRIL 22 AS EARTH DAY AND PROMOTES ACTIONS TO PROTECT OUR SPECIES IN CITY**

*In Partnership with Earth Day Network's Global Day of Conversation*

LOCATION, DATE - As part of CITY'S recognition of Earth Day 2019, NAME brought together public officials, experts, educators, NGO leaders and policymakers to discuss the protection and management of biodiversity in the city. The event, held at LOCATION, engaged key experts including NAMES and TITLES in a dialogue about how CITY may reduce its impact on biodiversity and increase habitat for wildlife.

"The loss of species and their habitat is a pressing problem around the world," said LEADER NAME, "It impacts the capacity of the planet to produce the food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe, the open spaces we share and people's well-being. It is essential that we reflect on our impact on the natural world and increase our efforts to foster biodiversity and Protect our Species."

The theme for the 49th anniversary of Earth Day is Protect our Species. Earth Day Network's Global Day of Conversation campaign connects locally-elected officials with their communities to address tangible environmental issues. This Earth Day, roundtable discussions like the one held in CITY took place around the world to catalyze initiatives that work to end the problem of species loss.

"There is a growing tidal wave of interest in protecting our species and some countries and governments are already in the vanguard. Earth Day Network believes we can turn that tidal wave into a permanent solution to species loss," said Kathleen Rogers, President of EDN.

Along with the roundtable discussion, NAME signed an Earth Day proclamation that affirms CITY'S commitment to protect our species and build a sustainable future. With this action, NAME called upon the community to extend the activism and passion for environmental protection well beyond Earth Day.

[Include one or two paragraphs on the city's strategy to protect species: CITY has been doing X and plans to do Y to move toward a reality with protection for wildlife...etc]

# Letter to the Editor

As the LEADERSHIP TITLE of CITY/TOWN, I know how important a healthy environment with thriving biodiversity is to our local community. This Earth Day, I call upon our community to prioritize actions to protect the other species in our community. As a community we can no longer afford to contribute to the problem of species loss. Our children deserve to grow up and see the same plants and animals that surround us today. The loss of biodiversity is becoming a significant threat to the environment and to our well-being. Our community must address this issue head on.

Around the world, human actions are leading to the loss of a wide range of species. Populations are shrinking and habitat is being destroyed. It is essential that we, as a community, reflect on how our actions impact the many plants and animals with whom we share the planet.

That’s why I’m participating in Earth Day Network’s Global Day of Conversation and leading a roundtable discussion on DATE on the impacts and solutions to the problem of species loss. We must ensure a biodiverse and healthy environment for generations to come.

I expect a robust discussion at the roundtable which will include some of our community’s foremost experts such as NAMES OF ATTENDEES/TITLES. With this action, I call upon everyone in the community to do their part to protect the environment, not only on Earth Day, but every day.

[PLACEHOLDER FOR A PERSONAL CLOSING STATEMENT]

[SIGNATURE]

# Social Media




---

**Utilize social media platforms** to promote Protect Our Species work in your city




---

**Ask your constituencies to support Protect Our Species** via social media:

**#EarthDay2019**  
**#ProtectOurSpecies**




---

**Tag @EarthDayNetwork** in all social media:

**#EarthDay2019**  
**#ProtectOurSpecies**

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

---

## Learn about Protect Our Species

EDN's [Protect Our Species Primer and Action Toolkit](#) is a comprehensive resource to not only understand the problem, but also learn about the things you can do to protect species and biodiversity.

---

## Host a Teach-In

Teach-Ins, a method used at the first Earth Day in 1970, are a series of lectures and discussions on a subject of public interest and are designed to ignite action! Involve your family, friends or co-workers; organize your local community; or develop an initiative in your organization to learn and agree on actions to Protect Our Species. Find a Toolkit to help you organize [here](#). Use it in combination with the [Plastic Pollution Primer and Action Toolkit](#).

---

## Take part in Climate Education Week

Climate Education Week occurs annually during the week leading up to Earth Day. This year it will run Monday, April 15th to Earth Day, Monday, April 22nd. [The Climate Education Week Toolkit](#) is a web-based, cross-disciplinary resource that includes a range of lesson plans and educational activities focused on the issue of Biodiversity. Teachers can utilize any or all activities from the toolkit during Climate Education Week or anytime during the academic year!

---

## Mobilize your campus

Earth Day Network's higher education campaign, [MobilizeU](#), is an international movement of concerned and active students and administrators uniting around their common interest of environmental action in support of a sustainable future for all. Our [MobilizeU Toolkit](#) helps students, faculty, and staff coordinate environmental events and initiatives campus-wide and provide a framework for implementing successful Teach-In events.

---

## See what other cities are doing

[Read more](#) about the important role of cities in protecting biodiversity and find examples of strategies that cities around the world are using to Protect Our Species!

---

## Spread the word and help grow the community

Join the conversation and share your actions using #EarthDay2019 #ProtectOurSpecies and tag @EarthDayNetwork to connect with other Earth Day events around the world. We want to hear what you are doing for Earth Day! Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#). Tag us @EarthDayNetwork, and you might get a shout-out!





## EARTH DAY NETWORK

The very first Earth Day in 1970 helped set the planet on a new course. Twenty million people turned out to launch the modern environmental movement as we know it today. This activism and optimism led to historic societal changes and new laws that turned the tide against 150 years of industrial pollution to improve the quality of the air, water and food that Americans consume. Its success inspired other countries to follow suit.

Even though Earth Day has grown exponentially, we are not advancing fast enough to win the race to save our planet. Many people don't understand how climate change, plastic pollution, deforestation, species extinction and other important global issues are relevant to their personal lives. Earth Day Network, the global coordinator of Earth Day, works to bring people together to build a new level of understanding and optimism about the future. We want environmental issues to again be at the top of political, economic, and social agendas.

Earth Day Network is the world's largest recruiter to the environmental movement. We have worked with more than 50,000 partners in over 190 countries to build environmental democracy. We work through a combination of education, public policy, and consumer campaigns to accomplish our goals.

2020 will be the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. Let's set in motion a new movement for global environmental education and activism and create both the resolve and optimism for sustainable change.

### CONTACT US



**EMAIL:**  
cities@earthday.org

**PHONE:**  
202-518-0044

### SHARE YOUR PROCLAMATION



Send a copy of your  
signed proclamation  
to this address:

Attn: Sebastian Rosemont  
Earth Day Network  
1616 P St NW Suite 340  
Washington, DC 20036