NPU STUDENT AMBASSADOR

TOOLKIT 1: NATURE POSITIVE

NATURE POSITIVE BY 2030

NATURE POSITIVE UNIVERSITIES · UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD · UN environment programme · UNITED NATIONS DECADE ON ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION 2021-2030

November 2025

Introduction to Toolkit 1

This Toolkit is intended to support the information provided in Workshop 1, to provide more detail on some of the topics, and suggest some related actions you might wish to carry out.

The actions you plan and carry out as part of your Nature Positive Student Ambassador role are flexible and up to you.

We understand that some of you will have the support of university staff, or be part of a student group, whilst others will be taking part as an individual. We also recognise that political situations in different countries can make it more or less easy to take certain actions.

For this reason we do not specify exactly which actions you should take and hope you find this toolkit useful. You can also turn to other NPU Student Ambassadors through the WhatsApp groups for help and support!

We look forward to working with you,

Emily, Hollie, Favour and Avani
November 2025

As we explored in Workshop 1, nature means lots of different things to different people, and all of the different values we place on nature can help us understand and motivate action to protect the living ecosystems around us.

Topic 1: Our diverse values of nature

Responses from Workshop 1 Zoom registration question "what does nature mean to you?":

At Nature Positive Universities (NPU), we believe that there is not a 'correct' way to view nature, and that to make change we need to understand different viewpoints and values.

Many of us will value nature intrinsically, but others might be more persuaded to protect ecosystems by ecosystem services provided by nature, such as clean air, water, health and climate resilience.

Communicating the importance of taking action for nature will be central to your role as a Nature Positive Student Ambassador!

Topic 1: Diverse values of nature

IPBES is the **Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.** IPBES have reviewed extensive literature and community perspectives, and suggest four ways to frame our relationship with nature.
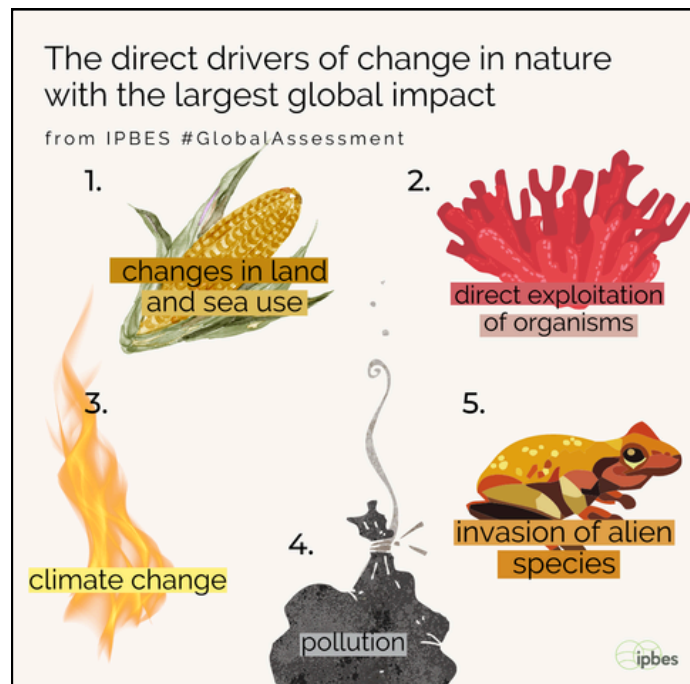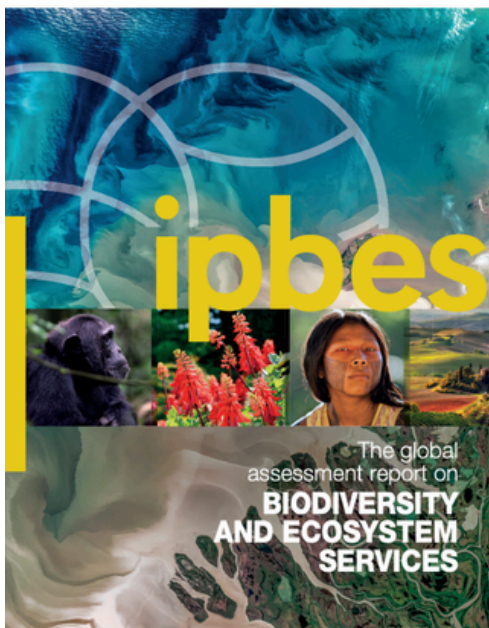

Using wetlands as an example, these are:

- **Living from** **wetland resources** - focusing on values of prosperity and livelihoods. Example: *Fish to sell at market*

- **Living in** **wetland landscape** - focusing on values of belonging and health. Example: *Health benefits of recreation*

- **Living with** **wetland species and habitats** - focusing on values of stewardship, responsibility. Example: *Fish as regulators of food web, rights to exist*

- **Living as** **wetland as part of us** - focusing on values of oneness and harmony with nature. Example: *Fish as our co-inhabitants*

Reference: Diverse values of nature for sustainability. Pascual et al. (2023)
https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-023-06406-9

Topic 2: What are the global pressures on biodiversity?

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) lists the five main direct drivers of biodiversity loss as the following:

The direct drivers of change in nature with the largest global impact from IPBES #GlobalAssessment

1. changes in land and sea use
2. direct exploitation of organisms
3. climate change
4. pollution
5. invasion of alien species

1. **Land use change** - conversion of forest to agriculture, land cleared for roads, cities or drained wetlands

2. **Direct exploitation of resources** - unsustainable harvest of fish, timber, wildlife and natural resources

3. **Climate change** - shifts in temperatures and weather patterns, rising sea levels, ecosystem shifts

4. **Pollution** - especially fresh water and marine impacts: nutrients, plastics, pesticides and toxic waste entering land and water

5. **Invasive species** - non-native species (often introduced by human activities) displacing local ecosystems and altering food chains

Reference: https://www.ipbes.net/models-drivers-biodiversity-ecosystem-change

Topic 3: Shifting baseline syndrome
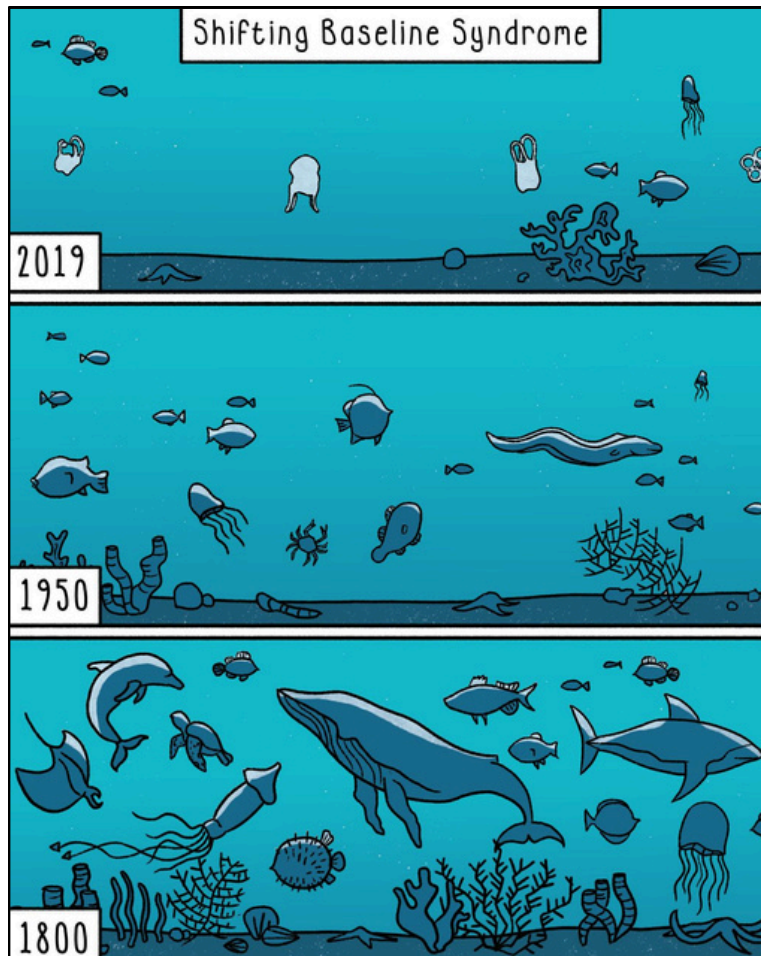
Shifting baseline syndrome is the gradual shifting of the accepted norm when it comes to the condition of natural places.

We notice changes occurring in our lifetimes and take the status from when we were young to be the best condition. However we cannot go back and see the conditions as they were when our parents and grandparents were young (although literature and photographs can us with provide historical insights).

Its hard for us as individuals to tell if there is more or less nature around us than there used to be. This may partly explain why we have been slow to act on the critical declines of species populations and ecosystems.

Reference: Pauly, Daniel (1995) "Anecdotes and the shifting baseline syndrome of fisheries." Trends in Ecology and Evolution, 10(10):430

We depend on nature for our survival, and nature depends on us. Over the last 50 years humans have continued to exploit resources at an unsustainable rate, leading to rapid global heating, loss of species and degraded ecosystems.
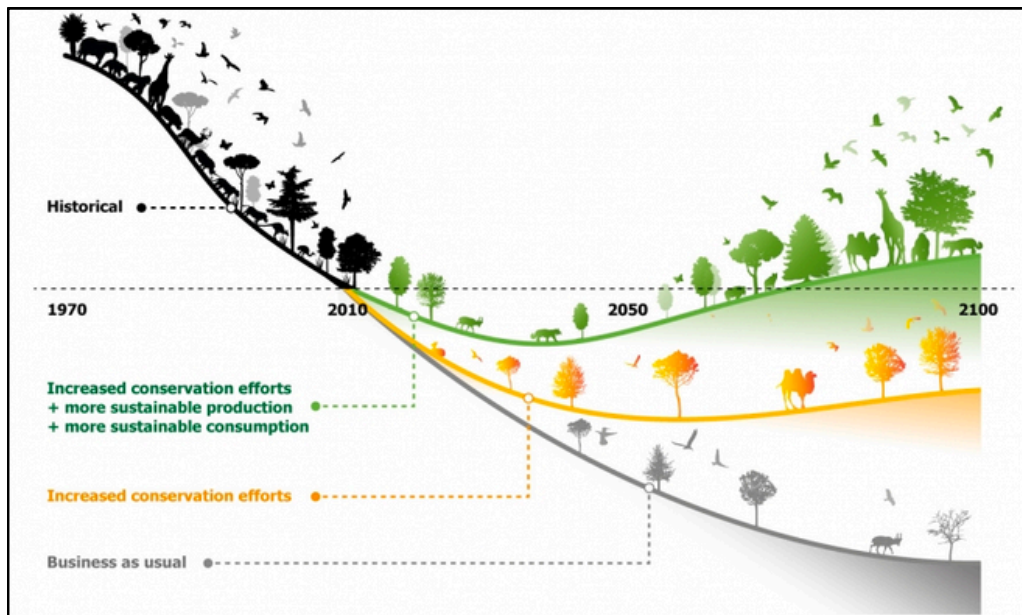

Scientists are measuring change in climate and nature over time. The black line on the above graph represents the historical trajectory of biodiversity loss and the coloured lines model different future scenarios.

The grey line represents 'business as usual' - with biodiversity continuing to decline. The yellow line represents increased conservation efforts such as more protected areas, and the green line represents considerable efforts put into conservation combined with more sustainable production and consumption, achieving restored species populations and ecosystems.

Nature Positive is a global societal goal to halt and reverse nature loss, so that there is more nature on our planet in the future than there is today.

Reference: Leclere et al (2020) bending the curve on terrestrial biodiversity loss
https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-020-2705-y

Topic 4: What does Nature Positive mean: for organisations?

Professor E.J. Milner-Gulland, founder of Nature Positive Universities states that to be Nature Positive, institutions must develop a measured biodiversity baseline, timeframe, a target, clear actions, analysis of how actions add up, monitoring and transparent reporting.
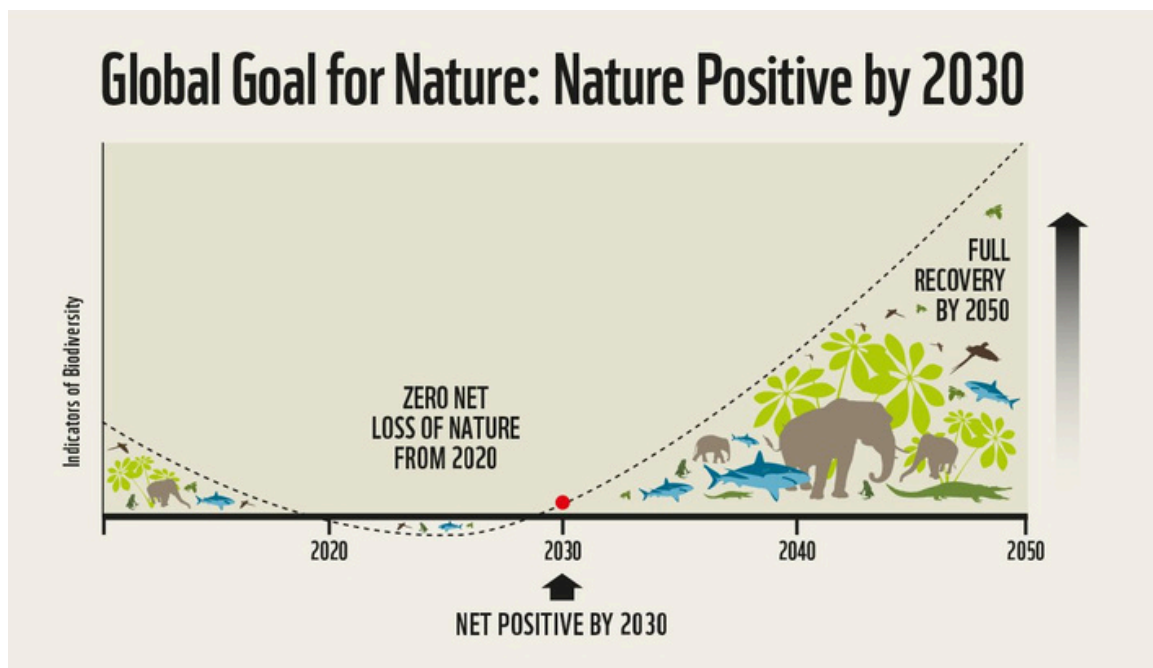
Setting and meeting ambitious targets for nature is vital to protecting life on earth and ensuring a liveable planet for future generations.

There are many factors outside of our spheres of influence that require a global transformation to enable truly nature-positive outcomes. For this reason there is growing consensus that companies or organisations cannot individually claim to be nature positive, rather that they are 'contributing towards' or beginning a journey towards the global nature-positive goal. Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nature-positive

References: Milner-Gulland, E.J. (2023) Don't dilute the term Nature Positive. https://www.nature.com/articles/s41559-022-01845-5

Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

In December 2022, at the UN Convention of Biological Diversity Conference of Parties, COP15, world governments and civil society came together and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) was adopted. The overarching mission was to "halt and reverse biodiversity loss" realised through 23 targets. Nature Positive Universities was launched here, with the first pledges announced by 117 universities.

We all have a part to play in bringing this framework to life. The definition of Nature Positive, and our mission at NPU, are aligned with that of the Global Biodiversity Framework.

We believe that universities can use their power and influence to help lead their communities on a Nature Positive journey, uniting both the climate and biodiversity crises to build more resilient ecosystems, help nature recover and limit climate change.

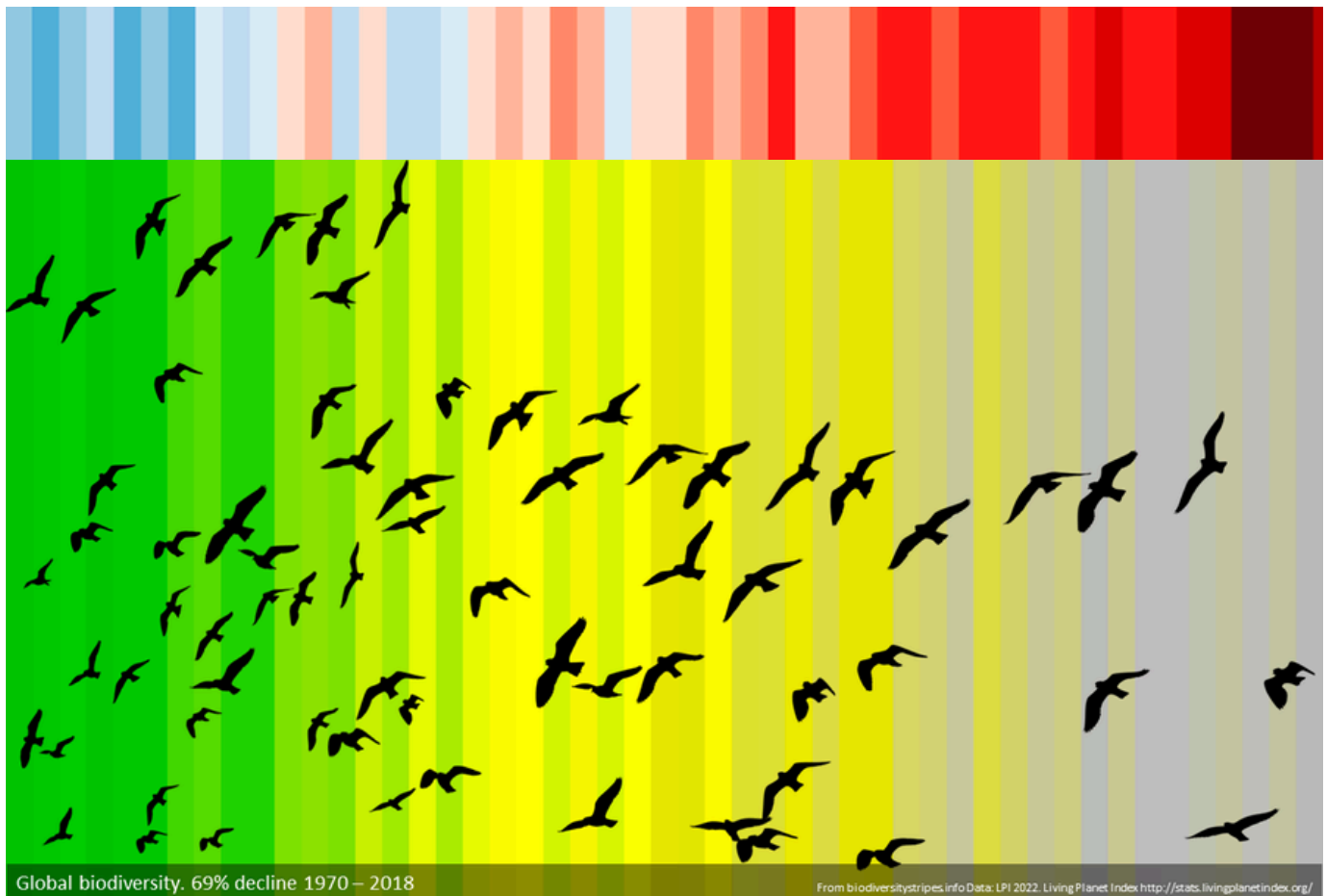# Nature Positive Initiative

Working together...

At NPU, we are one of the core members of the Nature Positive Initiative - a coalition of 27 of the world's largest conservation organisations, institutes, indigenous groups and business and finance organisations working together towards a shared nature-positive goal.

Reference: Nature Positive Initiative: https://www.naturepositive.org

Communicating Nature Positive

Global biodiversity. 69% decline 1970 – 2018

From biodiversitystripes.info Data: LPI 2022. Living Planet Index http://stats.livingplanetindex.org/

CLIMATE STRIPES – UNIVERSITY OF READING, DATA: MET OFFICE
BIODIVERSITY STRIPES – UNIVERSITY OF DERBY, DATA: WWF LIVING PLANET INDEX

The red and blue stripes above represent global average temperatures over the last 50 years, as recorded by the MET office, compared to the long term average. It is clear to see the rapid heating taking place through this time period.

In parallel below, the green, yellow and grey stripes represent data from the WWF Living Planet Index representing species populations of birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles. The green to grey represents a loss of almost 70% of biodiversity over the same time period.

These bold stripes can be great tools to help communicate these twin crises for climate and biodiversity, without need for complex data and graphs.

What are Ambassador actions?

As a Nature Positive Universities Ambassador, we want you to help make Nature Positive change in your university. The actions in our toolkits are designed to provide inspiration for what you might like to do in your role, although we don't want to be prescriptive, and we encourage you to take the approach that you think will work best.

Each of these toolkits relate to a specific workshop theme within this year's programme and include suggested actions that you might want take within that month or throughout your time as an Ambassador.

Tree planting at University of Nairobi, Kenya. Photo credit: Muscab Abdirizak Awel

Clean up events at Indraprastha College for Women, University of Delhi, India. Photo credit: Suryanshi Khakta

Environmental awareness raising at University of Benin, Nigeria. Photo credit: Favour Eragbie

Help us build a Nature Positive Universities vision

Emily Stott, 2023

Much of the framing for a nature positive goal comes from science and modelling.

However, to rethink our societies, economies and campuses in line with a nature positive goal will require people with **design**, **creativity** and **communications skills** as well as **collaboration**, **critical thinking**, **problem-solving** and **shifts in our habits and values**.

We believe there is a role for everyone, and value all of your insights and perspectives to work towards this global goal together.

It is easier to achieve things by working with others - we strongly recommend building a small team, or networking with staff or students at your university to help support you with your activities. We have some suggestions to help:

- Take steps to establish an NPU group for your campus (if one doesn't already exist). One of our previous student ambassadors, Ramandeep has written a great guide to share her experience - you can download it on the NPU website www.naturepositiveuniversities.net/student-resources/

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UNIVERSITIES
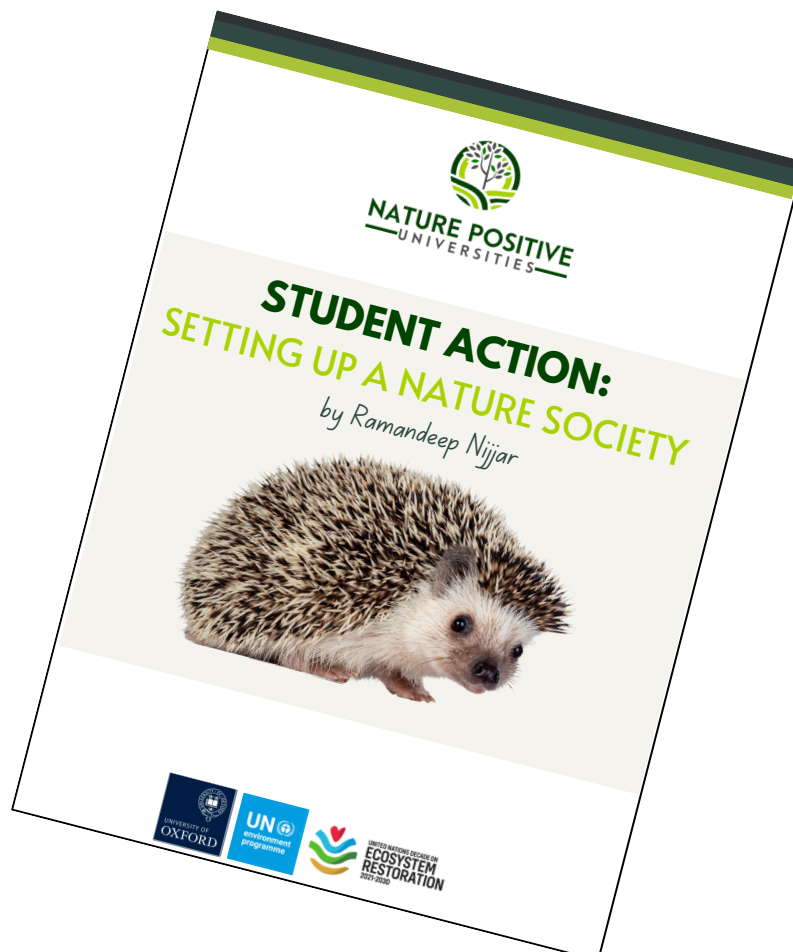
STUDENT ACTION:
SETTING UP A NATURE SOCIETY
by Ramandeep Nijjar

- Consider finding a mentor - someone who you can ask questions to and guide you - this could be a tutor, lecturer, friend or member of an environment group who can share their experience

- Student groups - it may be that your student union can offer support or that there are existing student groups focused on climate or nature that are worth collaborating with and inviting to work together

- Don't forget to introduce yourself to your fellow students here at NPU! Introduce yourself in the **NPU WhatsApp chat,** check out the country groups and share your ideas with your global peers!

We invite you to **create a list or map of people (or resources) that may be able to help you** take action for nature in your campus setting and follow up with some practical steps you can take to be in contact with them. Here is an example:

People to support:

-
- Emily, Hollie, Favour, Avani (NPU)
- Other Student Ambassadors
- Sustainability officer
- Lecturer
- Friend in NGO
- Students union

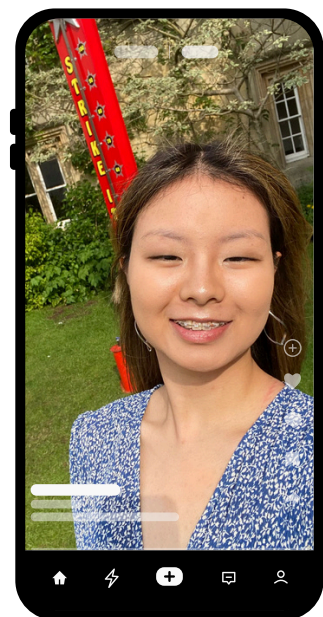# Suggested action: Creative response to Nature Positive!

Following the initial information provided in Workshop 1 and this Toolkit, including the graphs and links about NPU and the Nature Positive definition, we'd like to invite you to creatively explore the following questions:

"What does "Nature Positive" mean to you?"

" What might a nature-positive university or community look like?"

You could:

- Make a short video to say what Nature Positive means to you or why its important to you. This could be sharing something you have learned in the workshop, or exploring a vision of what it might mean practically for your campus or community.
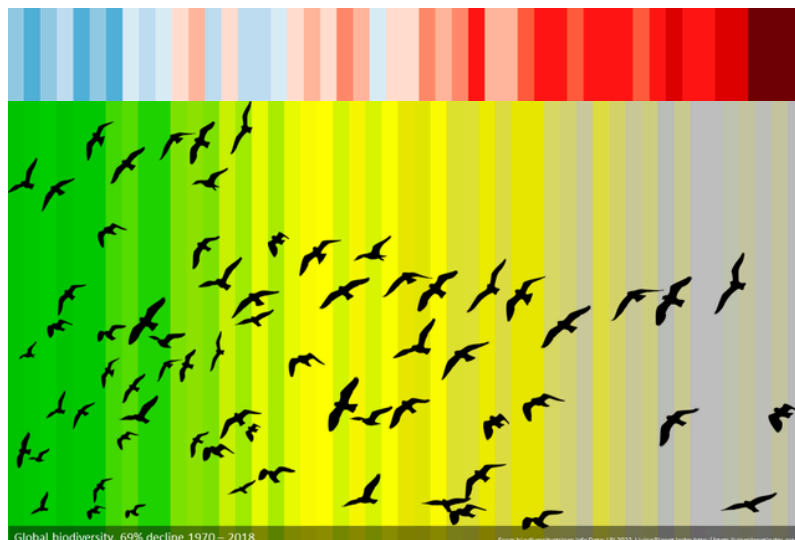
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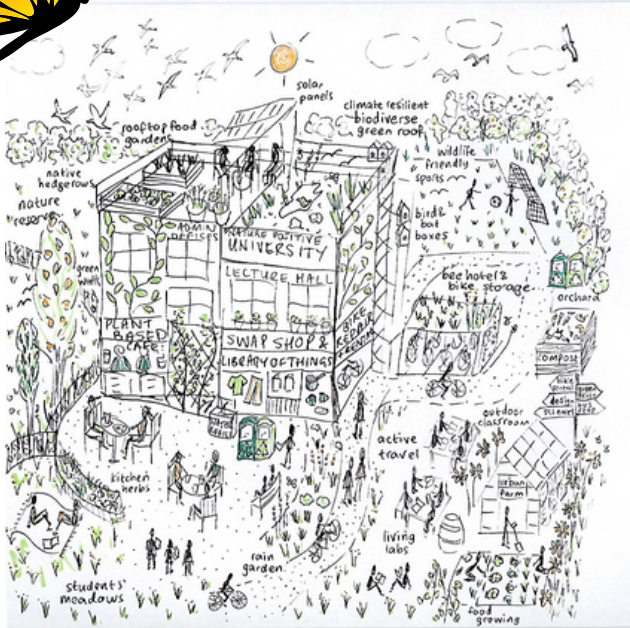
You could:

- Visit these websites:

    - CLIMATE: https://showyourstripes.info/
    - BIODIVERSITY: https://biodiversitystripes.info/

- Download your regional stripes

- Think about how you can use these to communicate these twin issues and make them relevant in your setting to inspire taking action for nature, such as on social media, posters, events, art

Global biodiversity. 69% decline 1970 – 2018. From biodiversitystripes.info Data: LPI 2022, Living Planet Index http://stats.livingplanetindex.org/

You could:

- Create some artwork, graphics, photography or writing to explore the concept of a nature positive university or campus. There is no right answer and we invite any scale or approach using your preferred style, media or language!

Before

After

We would love to feature some of your responses on our social media channels, through the NPU website and newsletters.

If you want to post your artwork on social media, please tag us and use the hashtag #GenerationRestoration

We will explore sharing your work with the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration team in collaboration with our partners at UNEP and through the global Nature Positive Initiative.

We will check with you before publishing anything, but this is an invitation to get started!

Further resources

As a reminder, here is a link to Nature Positive Universities **Student Resources page** where you can find the slides, workshop recording and other resources:

https://www.naturepositiveuniversities.net/student-resources/

We hope you find the suggested actions in this Toolkit useful and inspiring for starting your Nature Positive journey with us.

Please record your plans and actions in the **Activity Form** (link on the Student Resources page). This can be completed as many times as you like (the more the better!) and we will be happy to feature your actions and photos as Case Studies on our website and social media (with your permission!).

Finally, here are some ideas generated during Workshop 1 for the question: **"How could our campuses have more nature on them?"**