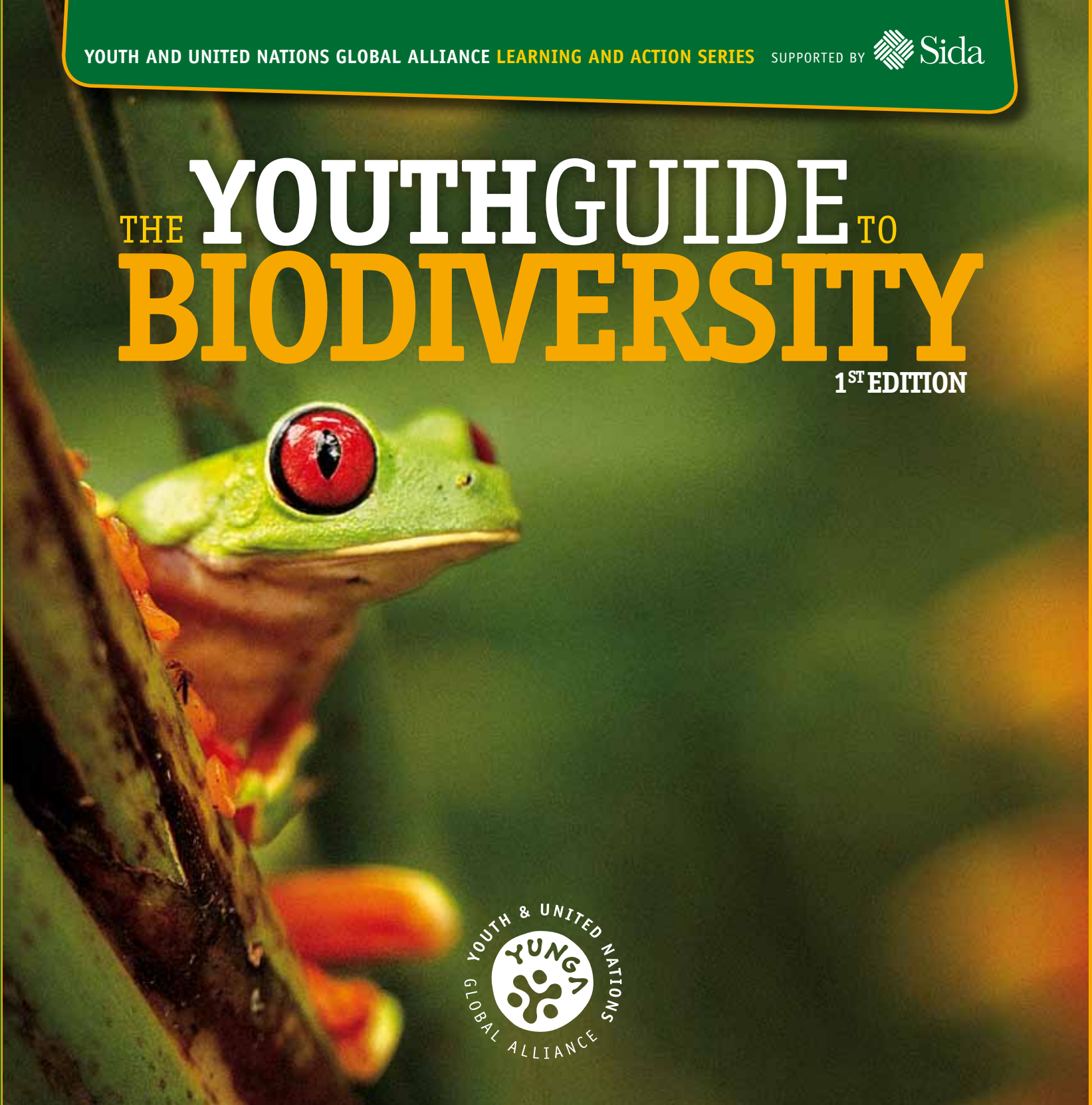


YOUTH AND UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL ALLIANCE **LEARNING AND ACTION SERIES** SUPPORTED BY  Sida

# THE **YOUTHGUIDE** TO **BIODIVERSITY**

1<sup>ST</sup> EDITION



# WE ARE MANY WE ARE YUNGA!

[www.yunga.org](http://www.yunga.org)





**TAKE ACTION** FOR BIODIVERSITY!

**REFLECT &  
GET INSPIRED**

**IDENTIFY &  
GET INFORMED**

**HAVE A  
LASTING IMPACT**

**PLAN &  
GET MOVING**

**GET  
CONNECTED**

**LEAD &  
GET OTHERS  
INVOLVED**

# THE YOUTHGUIDE TO BIODIVERSITY

The Youth and United Nations Global Alliance (YUNGA) is a partnership of United Nations agencies, civil society organisations and other institutions and groups involved with children and young people. YUNGA aims to empower children and young people to play an important role in society and to be active agents of change. It does so by creating engaging educational resources, activities and opportunities for participation in areas of key environmental and social concern at the local to the international level. The biodiversity youth guide is part of the YUNGA action and learning series which seeks to raise awareness, educate and inspire young people to take action. The series is supported by other educational resources and initiatives such as the United Nations Challenge Badges.



This biodiversity guide was jointly developed by CBD and FAO, with contributions and support from many other institutions and individuals. It is designed as an educational resource for schools, youth groups and other curious young learners. The guide explains biodiversity in terms of genes, species and ecosystems. It explores biodiversity under the sea, on the land, up in the air, in rivers and lakes, and on the farms that produce our food. The guide considers why biodiversity is important, how humans impact it, and what we must do to conserve the world's biological resources. At the end of the guide there are inspiring examples of youth-led initiatives and, most importantly, an easy-to-follow action plan to help you to develop your own biodiversity projects and conservation activities.



Download this guide and other educational resources at [www.yunga.org](http://www.yunga.org) or contact us at [yunga@fao.org](mailto:yunga@fao.org)



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# THE YOUTHGUIDE TO BIODIVERSITY



1<sup>ST</sup> EDITION



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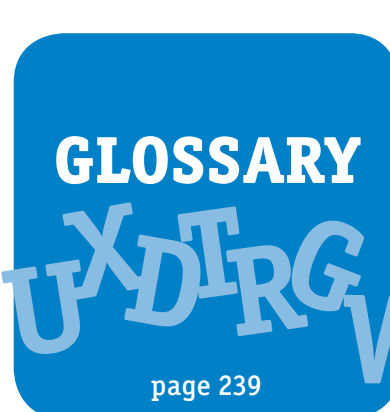
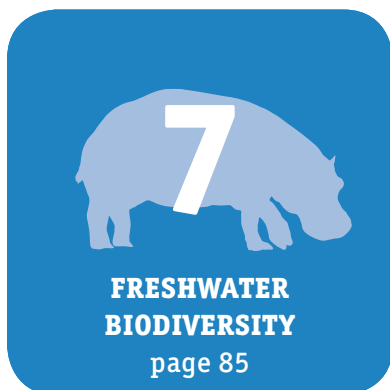
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# PREFACE

**A CAMOUFLAGED CREATURE THAT CAN LOOK IN TWO DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS AT THE SAME TIME...**

**A CREEPY CRAWLY WITH NO EYELIDS...**

**A HUGE, TRUMPETING MONSTER THAT CAN SMELL WATER FROM A DISTANCE OF THREE MILES (4.8KM)...**



**NO, THIS IS NOT A DESCRIPTION OF A TOTALLY WILD SCIENCE FICTION MOVIE!**

Welcome to planet Earth, whose inhabitants include chameleons, who can see in two different directions at the same time, insects without EYELIDS and elephants with their great sense of smell.

These are just a few examples. The variety of animals and plants on Earth is truly wondrous. Moreover, its diverse ecosystems, such as deserts, oceans, rivers, mountains, marshlands, forests, and grassy plains are specifically suited to the creatures and plants that live there. But changes to an ecosystem's environment can spell doom for its native plants and animals, and unfortunately, this is happening all too fast today. Many species are at risk of disappearing entirely. While extinction has always happened as a natural part of a gradual evolutionary process, the current rate of extinction of animals and plants is thought to be hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of times faster than that brought about by natural evolutionary processes.

Biodiversity experts say that nowadays most extinctions are caused by human activity, such as deforestation, mining, conversion of land, building dams, roads and cities, overfishing, and other activities that lead to habitat destruction, climate change, and pollution. So much so that the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has 5 689 entries on its endangered species list ([www.iucnredlist.org](http://www.iucnredlist.org)), many of whom might be familiar to you like species of gorillas, orangutans, turtles, eagles, whales, cranes,

seals, foxes, bears, and tigers but also many species of plants, birds, insects, reptiles, amphibians and fish.

Most of us believe that all life has the right to exist, and many of us also feel a personal loss when wildlife is damaged or destroyed. However, loss of Earth's biodiversity affects us in material ways too. In fact, biodiversity is the foundation on which human life depends. Plants and animals provide food and medicine, rivers provide precious drinking water, and trees absorb greenhouse gases and protect land from erosion. Damaging natural ecosystems may also affect natural processes, such as flood control and crop pollination, among others.

We invite you to dive into this comprehensive youth guide for in-depth insights into biodiversity, the benefits it provides to us, the threats it faces, and what actions we can take to protect it. The guide is richly illustrated, including award-winning photos taken by youth from around the world as part of the 'See the Bigger Picture' contest that supported *The Green Wave*, a global campaign promoting biodiversity. At the end of the guide there is a useful tool for setting up an action plan and undertaking your own biodiversity project, with Six Simple Steps towards Change. Take inspiration from far-reaching projects of other young global leaders and their innovative projects. At the end of each chapter and in the annexes, you will find additional resources, assignments for further learning about your surroundings, and other useful information.



**IT MIGHT BE TOO LATE TO SAVE SOME SPECIES FROM EXTINCTION, BUT IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO TAKE ACTION TO SAVE OTHERS. PEOPLE LIKE YOU CAN MAKE THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE, AND GETTING INFORMED AND MOTIVATED IS A GREAT WAY TO START.**

Anggun,

Jean Lemire,

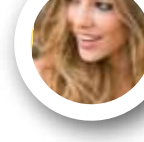
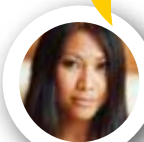
Carl Lewis,

Fanny Lu,

Debi Nova,

Lea Salonga

& Valentina Vezzali



# CBD, FAO & YUNGA AMBASSADORS

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## ANGGUN

YUNGA AND FAO GOODWILL AMBASSADOR

“Humanity must learn to share the planet with other species and as individuals we must change our daily habits to help preserve our biodiversity.”

## JEAN LEMIRE

CBD AMBASSADOR

“The health of our planet relies on an exquisitely delicate balance and extraordinary diversity of life. The more we learn about biodiversity and discover its beauty, the more we care for it.”



## DEBI NOVA

YUNGA AMBASSADOR

“May this guide inspires you to experience and explore the wonders of nature, preserve it and motivate your family, friends, classmates, and community to save our planet’s biodiversity.”

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## FANNY LU

YUNGA AND FAO GOODWILL AMBASSADOR

“I hope this guide opens your eyes to the incredible biodiversity around us and motivate you to take action.”

## CARL LEWIS

YUNGA AND FAO GOODWILL AMBASSADOR

“We must win the race against time to preserve what we have left of our biodiversity, every action that you and I take is important.”



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## LEA SALONGA

YUNGA AND FAO GOODWILL AMBASSADOR

“Our world is truly wonderful; let us learn to live in harmony with it and preserve it for future generations to also enjoy.”

## VALENTINA VEZZALI

YUNGA AMBASSADOR

“We’re surrounded by awe-inspiring and life-enriching plants and animals. Can you imagine living in a world without them? I can’t – so let’s take a stand for biodiversity!”



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