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Press release

Young heroes wanted!

Call for applications: Zoo and Tierpark Berlin launch new Biodiversity Prize

In difficult times, it's even more important to come together and spread hope. Young people in particular are motivated to make the world a better place and help shape the future.

Berlin's zoos are therefore calling on school pupils in Berlin and Brandenburg to submit creative ideas for ways to protect biodiversity on their doorsteps as part of the new "Young Heroes Wanted" initiative. The most exciting proposals, which must include concrete steps for implementation, will be awarded a cash prize to help them become reality.

Biodiversity on Earth is a prerequisite for the healthy development and long-term prosperity of humans. Intact ecosystems provide us with important raw materials, fertile soil, safe drinking water and clean air. They absorb greenhouse gases and make it easier for habitats to adapt to climate change. But many habitats are currently in a very precarious situation, and as a result the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) currently lists almost 37,500 animal and plant species as threatened – more than ever before. "Dwindling biodiversity is a complex challenge and poses a serious threat," says Zoo and Tierpark Director Dr Andreas Knieriem. "It is our duty to take measures so that future generations are left with a world worth living in." But there's still hope! "The German capital, for example, is one of the greenest metropolises in Europe – more than 400,000 trees line its streets and it is home to numerous protected natural landmarks and more than 20,000 animal and plant species," Knieriem adds. In fact, cities like Berlin are very interesting from the point of view of species and nature conservation: set within an agriculture-dominated landscape, they are actually considered biodiversity hotspots.

Berlin and Brandenburg school pupils in the 3rd to 9th school year are now being asked to come up with creative ideas for species protection projects to be implemented on school grounds, in public green spaces, or in their local neighbourhood. A jury will award the five best concepts, thus helping fund their implementation:

- 1st prize: €5,000
- 2nd prize: € 3,000
- 3rd - 5th prize: € 2,500

Zoo Berlin will invite the prize winners to an award ceremony in the summer.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.zoo-berlin.de/de/artenschutzpreis>