

GLOBAL YOUTH COUNCIL

Background

BirdLife International is a truly global partnership of environmental NGOs, national conservation organisations, all of whom share a common vision – to mobilise lasting, sustainable protection for the world's birds, their habitats, and global biodiversity in general.

Together, we believe in a holistic approach to conservation – using the insight we gain from our rigorous studies on the health of the world's bird species, to work for a world where nature and people live in harmony.

Connecting young people with nature to develop conservation knowledge, values and skills is vitally important in the fight against the climate and biodiversity crisis.

The nature and biodiversity crises which we face will have the most devastating impact on the lives of younger generations as it is they who will inherit the planet. For our advocacy and engagement work to be most effective we must address this lack of participation.

Young people are the future; however, their values and priorities are often not included in decision making processes.

There is a new movement of young people engaging with the nature and climate crisis demonstrating the impact this generation can create.

BirdLife International doesn't engage enough with young people, despite many local BirdLife Partners working with young people nationally.



History

At the Global Partnership meeting in September 2022, young people nominated by BirdLife partners from around the world were brought together to discuss and envision greater youth participation in BirdLife's governance and advocacy activities. A manifesto was developed by the group which was presented to CEO Patricia Zurita and Council Chair Dr Mike Rands detailing a potential approach.

Its key elements included the ultimate participation of young people with BirdLife should be democratic, regionally diverse and credibly contribute to BirdLife's governance. In December 2022, this was presented to the Global Council and approval was received to proceed to a specific proposal to be considered by Council in June 2023. The youth group met again in March 2023 and created the structure below.



Structure

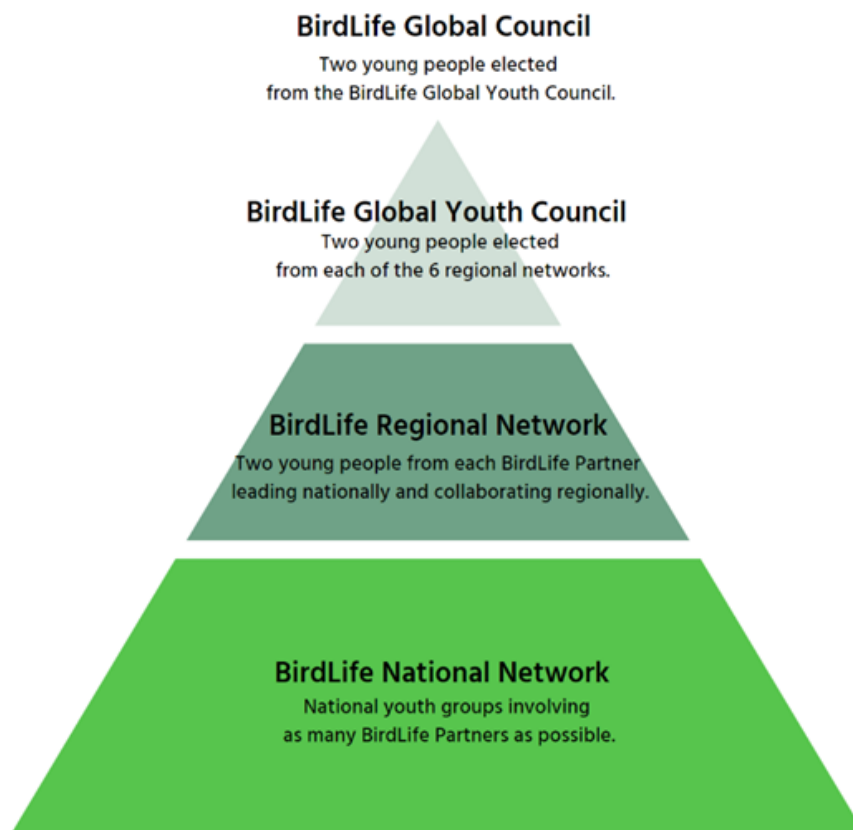
At the national level, BirdLife Partners are invited to create and build upon existing national youth groups. Their role is focused on national conservation efforts from practical volunteering at nature reserves to campaigning and lobbying their government for policy changes. Activities can include events, volunteer days and social activities.

BirdLife International is separated into six different regions (Europe and Central Asia, Africa, Asia, Pacific, Middle East and the Americas). At this regional level, two young people are nominated from

each country where there is a BirdLife Partner to lead the national youth groups and come together with other young people from the region to collaborate on region-wide initiatives of their choosing.

From each of the 6 regional groups, two young people will be elected (from the regional representatives) to form the BirdLife Global Youth Council. Their role will be liaising directly with BirdLife International Global Secretariat and being the voice for young people across the partnership.

Finally, BirdLife's Global Council consists of CEOs of BirdLife Partners around the world. Two young people from the Global Youth Council will be elected to sit on the Global Council. The BirdLife Global Council is ultimately responsible for the strategic direction of BirdLife International.



Age Range

It is recommended that from the Regional Network level upwards youth council members should be aged between 18-26 years old until. If safeguarding procedures are in place to enable young people who are, then participants can be aged from 16-26 years old. If participants reach past the age limit whilst serving their term on the Global Youth Council or Global Council, they should continue until their term is completed.

Nationally, it is up to the BirdLife Partner which age group.

Nationally, the BirdLife Partner should determine which age group is most suitable to participate in their national network.

If you reach the upper limit of the age limit during your term, you can still finish the role.

Our Values

Diverse by Nature	Acting for Nature	Action through Insight	The Power of Many	Champions of Change
We celebrate the diversity of nature and humans – every voice counts, every difference is valued.	Working for birds saves all of nature.	Evidence-based science informs all our decisions, driving conservation forward.	Our Partnership is stronger together – locally and globally.	We stand up for nature, holding decision-makers to account.

Voluntary Roles

It should be noted that all roles and participation in the youth council networks from national to global levels are on a voluntary basis.

As such, participants may withdraw their commitment to the youth council at any point with the exception of the Global Council representatives who must adhere to the Global Council guidelines on withdrawal.

Participants must be nominated or state their interest in good faith that they will be able to adhere at least to the minimum time commitment.

Conflicts and Complaints

In the presentation of arguments, the complainant should be factual, objective, respectful, culturally sensitive, moderate and seek a genuine resolution. Where the complaint relates to a third party, all involvement and support by that party or any other party in the process and any conflict of interest arising from that, should be disclosed by the complainant.

Inclusive youth engagement

Inclusivity is a fundamental principle guiding the creation of the youth council. Equal opportunities are extended to all candidates, irrespective of social obstacles, unemployment, or residence in rural areas. Our commitment to inclusivity ensures that every individual, dedicated to the cause of nature, has the chance to participate meaningfully. By embracing diversity, we aim to enrich the council's perspectives and foster a more inclusive and sustainable future, both locally and globally.

Roles and Responsibilities

BirdLife National Youth Group

Nationally, young people will come together to form a youth group, led by the BirdLife Partner and national youth representatives who form the BirdLife Youth Regional Networks. There is no limitation on the number of young people who can participate in the national networks. Age limitation, objectives and activities of the group is at the sole discretion of the BirdLife Partner.

Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To work with BirdLife Partners in national conservation action.
Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To be determined by the BirdLife Partner and national representatives.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Including conservation volunteering, campaigning, attending events and communications content.

BirdLife Youth Regional Networks

From the national networks, two participants will be nominated by the BirdLife Partner (by CEO, staff, or board as appropriate for each partner) to represent the BirdLife Partner in the regional network. There will be 6 regional networks consisting of national representatives. These national representatives will collaborate with BirdLife Partners to run the youth national networks.

We recommend that the young people is a Member of the local BirdLife Partner.

Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To engage and lead national youth networks in collaboration with BirdLife Partners, share experiences, information and ideas from the national youth networks to the regional network and to the council, and develop connections for region-wide conservation activities.
Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Recommended four meetings per year (once per quarter). BirdLife Staff members in attendance.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Planning national events, developing campaigns to encourage young people to join national networks, planning regional campaigns and creating communications content. Coordinator: Global Youth Council representative

BirdLife Global Youth Council

From the BirdLife Youth Regional Networks, individuals will nominate themselves to sit on the BirdLife Global Youth Council. There will be places for two young people per region and a total of 12 young people on the Council.

Candidates must produce a short video and statement of interest. There will then be a vote (1 vote per partner- regionally youth representatives) so each regional group will democratically elect two young people to represent their region on the BirdLife Global Youth Council. Each region, (Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe & Central Asia, Middle East, Pacific) will be represented.

Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To liaise with BirdLife International staff on the activities of the regional youth networks, to share ideas, concerns and information about what young people want to see in conservation and to be the voice of BirdLife youth in global communications campaigns and content.
Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Six meetings per year (once per quarter). Attending the four meetings of the regional youth networks (not missing more than two per year), and potentially two additional meetings as BirdLife Global Youth Council together with BirdLife International staff. At least one person representing global council should attend.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leading regional networks and supporting region-wide conservation activities, contact point with BirdLife International, and acting as spokespeople for the youth network. <u>Coordinator</u>: Global Youth Council Chair

BirdLife Global Council

The BirdLife Global Youth Council will vote amongst themselves to elect one individual to sit on the BirdLife Global Council. A second individual should also be elected so that there is one young person to sit and vote on the BirdLife Global Council, with a second to support and fill in/replace as necessary.

Terms would be staggered, and initially of 2-4 years, to ensure continuity and passing on of knowledge. The person with the most votes takes on the first period of time (check about the global council).

Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To represent young people on the BirdLife Global Council.
Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eight meetings per year. Attending the four meetings of the regional youth networks (not missing more than two per year), potentially two additional meetings as BirdLife Global Youth Council together with BirdLife International staff and two Global Council meetings.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leading regional networks and supporting region-wide conservation activities, contact point with BirdLife International, acting as spokespeople for the youth network and representing young people on the BirdLife Global Youth Council.

Selection Criteria

BirdLife International champions the following qualities and experiences of the youth participants for the Global Council and Global Youth Council.

- Confident, charismatic natural communicators.
- Evidence of leadership skills through experiences and willingness to take the initiative in leading the group on new proposals.
- Ability to make at least the minimum time commitment in attending the meetings and being fully involved in generating content and supporting the activities of the group.
- Genuine and authentic passion for nature and birds.
- Demonstrable experience in communications such as active in social media, writing blogs, creating videos etc.
- Willingness to learn and support the work of BirdLife International and its partners.
- Knowledge of the BirdLife Partnership and conservation would be considered desirable.
- Representation of diversity within each network and group

Do you want to get involved?

Are you passionate about protecting our planet's biodiversity? Do you want to make a tangible difference in the fight against environmental degradation? Here's your chance to take action!

BirdLife Partners around the globe are actively engaged in nature conservation, working tirelessly to safeguard habitats, protect endangered species, and promote sustainable practices. But they can't do it alone.

We're calling on youth like you to step up and volunteer your time, energy, and enthusiasm to support these vital conservation efforts. Whether it's monitoring bird populations, restoring habitats, or raising awareness in your community, there's a role for everyone.

Together, we can make a real impact on the future of our planet. Join us in standing up for nature, and together, let's create a brighter, more sustainable world for generations to come.

Ready to make a difference? Sign up to volunteer with your national [BirdLife Partner](#) today!

