

Sustainable Futures Biodiversity Guardian Challenge

Teacher Guide & Judging Criteria

Purpose

The Biodiversity Guardian Challenge extends the learning from the Sustainable Futures Youth Programme Plants and Animals workshops.

Through a range of self-directed missions, students are encouraged to explore biodiversity, ecosystems, adaptations, sustainability and conservation within their homes, schools and communities.

Students can choose missions that interest them and complete them in a way that suits their learning style.

Role of Teachers

Teachers are welcome to:

- Encourage participation
 - Help students select suitable missions
 - Support reflection and sustainability thinking
 - Verify activities where appropriate
 - Submit entries on behalf of students if required
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To Enter

Students must:

- Choose missions from any of the six challenge themes
 - Complete missions worth at least 5 points
 - Record their work in the Mission Log & Entry Form
 - Submit evidence
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Challenge Dates

- **Challenge Opens:** 1 September 2026
 - **Challenge Closes:** 29 January 2027
 - **Winner Announced:** 12 March 2027
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Champion Eligibility

To be considered for the **Biodiversity Guardian Champion Prize**, students must:

- Complete missions worth at least 5 points
 - Complete missions from at least 3 different themes
 - Answer the Champion Reflection Question
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Mission Levels

● Green Missions = 1 Point

● Yellow Missions = 2 Points

● Red Missions = 5 Points

★ Native Species Bonus = +1 Point (earn an extra point when your mission includes a native New Zealand species)

Guardian Levels

- Bronze Guardian = 5-9 points
 - Silver Guardian = 10-19 points
 - Gold Guardian = 20+ points
 - Biodiversity Guardian Champion = Best Overall Entry
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Supporting Students

Students may:

- Work independently
- Work with family members
- Work with friends
- Complete missions at home, school, on a farm or within their community

Students are encouraged to complete and submit their own reflections and learning, even when working with others.

Students do not need to complete every mission.

We encourage students to select missions that interest them and allow them to demonstrate their learning and creativity.

Acceptable Evidence

Evidence may include:

- Photos
- Videos
- Drawings
- Posters
- Models
- Presentations
- Written reflections
- Interview notes
- Voice recordings
- Parent or teacher confirmation

Evidence does not need to be professionally produced.

Judging Criteria

The Biodiversity Guardian Champion will **not** be selected simply based on who earns the most points.

Mission points demonstrate participation.

The Champion will be chosen using the judging criteria below.

Criteria	Points
Understanding	5
Effort	5
Creativity	5
Impact	5
Sustainability Thinking	5
Total	25

Understanding (5)

Has the student demonstrated an understanding of:

- Biodiversity
 - Adaptations
 - Ecosystems
 - Sustainability
 - Conservation
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Effort (5)

Has the student:

- Completed missions thoroughly?
 - Submitted evidence?
 - Shown commitment to the challenge?
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Creativity (5)

Has the student:

- Used original ideas?
 - Demonstrated imagination?
 - Presented their learning in an engaging way?
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Impact (5)

Has the student:

- Taken meaningful action?
 - Applied their learning to a real-world situation?
 - Created a positive outcome for nature, people or their community?
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Sustainability Thinking (5)

(This is the most important judging category.)

Can the student demonstrate connections between:

- Nature
- People
- The Economy
- Future Generations

Key Message for Judges

A student who completes fewer missions but demonstrates strong understanding, reflection, creativity and sustainability thinking may score higher than a student who completes many missions with little explanation.

The challenge aims to reward:

- Curiosity
- Learning
- Action
- Sustainability Thinking

rather than simply the number of missions completed.

Questions?

If you have any questions about the challenge or student entries, please contact:

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