

Protecting biological diversity

- Volkswagen AG Mission Statement -

Biodiversity - the variety of species, genetic diversity within these species and the diversity of eco-systems - make a considerable contribution to the quality and diversity of human life. Biodiversity helps to ensure that we can eat healthily, have clean water, fertile soil and a balanced climate to live in.

In addition to the changes in climate, the destruction of forests and pollution of the ozone are the biggest threats to biological diversity. The sealing of landscapes and intensification of farming activity have destroyed important habitats for animals and plants. The restriction of habitats by the construction of insurmountable roads threatens the wild animal population.

The protection of biodiversity and climate protection represent two of the most important ecological challenges of the 21st century. The goal is to preserve the genetic reproduction potential for future generations. Failure to ensure species protection is not sustainable in the long-term and will leave a heavy debt for generations to come.

Protection of biological diversity is a joint responsibility for the whole of society. As important as government measures and international conventions are, society as a whole must work together to ensure that their living and working habits work in harmony with the protection of biodiversity.

As an industrial company active all over the world with a role model function for other members of society, Volkswagen accepts its responsibility in the field of species protection. We aim to demonstrate how a company can succeed in combining the requirements of material production with the protection of biodiversity to ensure sustainable development. And we have extensive experience in this field: environmental protection has been part of the goals and standard practice at Volkswagen for many years. Our environmental management process sets the benchmark for other companies in our sector.

Climate protection and species protection go hand-in-hand. We believe that the protection of biodiversity is intrinsically linked to the reduction of gases which are harmful to the climate and are increasing our efforts in the field of climate protection accordingly. We are focussing on the development and marketing of vehicles with optimized fuel consumption, promotion of alternative drive and fuel concepts and projects to promote environmentally-friendly driving behaviour.

As a global company, Volkswagen implements measures to support species protection equally at all its sites throughout the world. We recognize the benefits afforded by protected biotopes. Designated nature conservation areas and national parks must not be used for economic purposes.

Volkswagen has built up long-term cooperation relationships and partnerships with corporate groups, in particular NGOs, with experience and expertise in the field of conservation and species protection.

The initiatives we are involved in around the Volkswagen sites include:

- Measures for the direct protection of endangered species
- Innovative support of biotopes as part of compensatory measures
- Programmes for environmental education and training
- Support of research projects

In order to place even more emphasis on the topic of species protection in the future, Volkswagen will incorporate the following measures into its processes:

1. Creation of ecological assessments to document the status quo of the endangered species in the vicinity of the production sites, along with the emission values of the plant.
2. Wide-spread recognition of the performance indicators in the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) for biodiversity as a norm for the creation of our own sustainability reports. Continued development of a relevant Volkswagen-specific key-data system.
3. Transfer of responsibility for activities in the field of biodiversity to the company environmental management representatives.
4. Integration of conservation in the environmental action plan at the sites as part of the environmental management system. Definition of conservation-related goals and measures during regular international regional conferences in the environmental action plans of the locations.
5. Extensive reports on the activities and successes in the field of biological diversity.

6. Incorporation and communication with partner companies regarding the biodiversity policy of the company via the B2B supplier platform.
7. Expansion of know-how in matters relating to biodiversity in consultation with competent partners and further development of joint projects in the field of conservation and species protection.

Volkswagen AG accepts its responsibility to ensure that the global community reaches the defined goals with regard to biological diversity (CBD) together. We regard our wide-reaching dedication to species protection as an effective contribution to sustainable development.