



Eco Newsletter, October 2025, Issue 15

Biodiversity

Editorial



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I feel so fortunate to be living in a Brahma Kumaris retreat centre, set within 136 acres of natural bushland adjacent to a World Heritage National Park. We have a rich biodiversity of animals and plants on the property, some even rare ones, such as the Giant Dragonfly. When I walk from my bedroom in the early morning hours to our meditation room in another building, I often pass a possum munching grass like a lawn mower or hear the thump, thump of a kangaroo jumping away. Later in the day the birds are up creating a background melody of sound. Our most recent encounter with the furry friends we share this land with are the small marsupial mice, who discovered air conditioners make good winter homes. Their tails

hanging down gave them away! One of the reasons the Blue Mountains is a World Heritage Area is the rich biodiversity found here, particularly the number and extent of Eucalypt (gum tree) species.

Sadly, the world's biodiversity is declining at an alarming rate. The World Wildlife Fund in 2024 found a 73% decline in global populations of mammals, fish, birds and amphibians since 1970. To help combat this, we set up a Landcare Group at the retreat centre over 20 years ago. The group meets each month and removes weeds from the creek banks, preventing the weeds from spreading downstream into the national park. Blackberry and Scottish Broom are two of the main weeds we have removed. These plants take over and replace the native plants, and unlike the natives, they don't supply food or shelter for the native animals, thus being one reason for biodiversity loss.

Our first piece in this newsletter is a video showcasing what the Brahma Kumaris are doing to help awaken people to the need to care for our planet and its biodiversity. The initiatives are practical and strengthened with meditation, such as sustainable yogic agriculture, where natural farming and meditation combined give greater results; the India 1 Solar Thermal Power Plant and the Kalp Taruh innovative forest restoration project. Our second piece is an article explaining why we need to protect biodiversity and environmental integrity, providing a clear explanation of what hasn't worked in the past, and what has, so we can consider how we can contribute. If the issue of biodiversity loss is new to you, then the third article from the World Wildlife Fund will explain what biodiversity is, why it is under threat and why that Matters. The fourth piece is from the Green Team who attended the Biodiversity COP 16 in Cali hosted an event in the Faith-Based Organisations Pavilion called Awakening Consciousness: the interconnections of human actions and biodiversity. Panellists and participants shared inspiring stories from their own practices and knowledge of spiritual and indigenous wisdom that helps shift mindsets - the first step in revitalising biodiversity. Finally, there is a beautiful meditation commentary on Caring for Mother Earth. Interestingly, many of us have noticed at the retreat centre that the animals are not afraid of us, carrying on with their feeding even if we pass by closely. This suggests that to support biodiversity, we not only need to care for the habitat of our wildlife and plants, but also care for the vibration or energy we are contributing to the atmosphere, so that animals feel safe to live there. Regular meditation is the way to create a peaceful, safe atmosphere that won't scare away our wildlife.



Jessica Yuille has been practising Raja Yoga meditation with the Brahma Kumaris since 2003. She coordinates the Brahma Kumaris Blue Mountains Retreat Centre with a Management Team, and actively fosters environmental care as well as spiritual growth. She is a member of the Brahma Kumaris Environment Initiative in Australia.

The Brahma Kumaris and Biodiversity



This video was put together as a contribution to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in Montreal (COP15) in December 2022 and includes an address by Sister Jayanti Kirpalani, Additional Administrative Head of the Brahma Kumaris, as well as an introduction to practical initiatives such as Sustainable Yogic Agriculture. Also showcased is the India One Solar Thermal Power Plant built to power the Brahma Kumaris Shantivan campus in Abu Road, Rajasthan, India. It is a 1MW electrical research and demonstration project in which locally developed storage enables continuous power generation. Finally, the video highlights KalpTaruh, an innovative tree planting programme.

Watch the video [here](#).

Environmental Integrity



Leura Retreat Centre

Sandra Nicholls is an environmental educator and an active member of the Brahma Kumaris in Australia. She has been involved in bush regeneration at their retreat centre at Leura in the Blue Mountains of Sydney. Sandra was an inaugural member of the Australian based Faith Ecology Network for the Brahma Kumaris and is also a current member of the National Brahma Kumaris Green Team. She lives in Australia's first gold town, Clunes, in the central highlands of Victoria. Now retired, she has formed Transition Clunes to promote community resilience through produce and clothes swaps. Sandra is also a member of the Clunes Waterways and Landcare Group who are slowly replacing English elm and poplar trees planted by early European settlers with local indigenous native plants along the creek that also supports a colony of platypus and rakali, a native water rat.

In this article about environmental integrity for the Faith Ecology Network, Sandra covers why environmental integrity is at risk, what we can do about it and why we need different approaches to those that have been used in the past.

Read the article [here](#).

What is Biodiversity?



Even the most important biodiversity hubs around the world are not immune from human pressures. Borneo, a massive island in southeast Asia, is home to more than 1,400 different animal species, and at least 15,000 plant species. Iconic wildlife like orangutans, pygmy elephants, clouded leopards, rhinos, and proboscis monkeys share the landscape with the world's tallest tropical trees. You'll also find more than 50 species of carnivorous pitcher plants that trap and consume insects and small animals. There are up to 3,000 species of orchids; flying, color-changing frogs; and slugs that shoot darts at their mates.

But Borneo's vast wealth of natural resources has attracted more than nature lovers. For decades, large-scale, international interests have worked to extract as much as they can from the island— hardwood trees; coal; rubber; and gold, diamonds, and other metals and minerals. Forests are decimated to make way for profitable palm oil plantations. Even the plants and animals that make Borneo so special are hunted, harvested, and sold on the black market.

Read [more](#).

Awakening Consciousness: the interconnections of human actions and biodiversity



The Green Team at the Biodiversity COP 16 in Cali, Columbia last year, hosted an event in the Faith-Based Organisations Pavilion. Panelists and participants shared inspiring stories from their own practices and knowledge of spiritual and indigenous wisdom that help shift our mindsets - the first step in revitalising biodiversity.

Watch [here](#).

Meditation



The International Day for Biodiversity (IDB) was celebrated on 22 May annually and 2025 theme was: Harmony with nature and sustainable development

As the global community is called to re-examine our relationship to the natural world, one thing is certain: despite all our technological advances we are completely dependent on healthy and vibrant ecosystems for our water, food, medicines, clothes, fuel, shelter and energy, just to name a few.

Relax and enjoy this [meditation](#).