



Brief description of the science communication project

"SOUNDS WILD - Rediscovering Birds and Bats"

The science communication project SOUNDS WILD communicates the value of biodiversity to children and young people throughout Austria using the example of the numerous ecosystem services provided by birds and bats. Through participatory workshops, nationwide creative competitions and a broad digital communication strategy, scientific, technical and creative references to nature conservation are promoted, thus strengthening young people's confidence in dealing with environmental issues.

Knowledge is powerful: it enables us to remain capable of acting in times of complex challenges.

However, knowledge transfer has seldom been as challenged as it is today, when debates about a variant pandemic meet daily with news about wars and species extinction. In Austria, scepticism about science is steadily increasing while the well-being of society is declining. Young target groups and nature conservation issues are particularly affected by this development. They have often been lost in the debate chaos of recent years, although they are the key to a sustainable future.

The science communication project "SOUNDS WILD - Rediscovering Birds and Bats" brings young target groups closer to the value of nature.

In more than 100 workshops, which are offered free of charge over two years for pupils in the lower, middle and upper grades in all nine provinces of Austria, the focus is on participation. Under guidance of experienced experts, pupils build their own bat detectors before going outdoors with them and a free app to identify bird sounds and bat calls. What the discovered species have to offer will be discussed and answered in a nature quiz at the end of the workshops. From the common noctule bat to the wren: all of the more than 70 common to highly endangered bats and birds on our project species list contribute to one of the four ecosystem service types: whether supporting (e.g. soil formation through guano), providing (e.g. forest reforestation through seed dispersal), regulating (e.g. pest control through insectivores) or cultural (e.g. inspiration through diversity) - the flying vertebrates ensure our well-being every day!

By combining science, communication, art and technology, the project will reach pupils all over Austria and also inspire teachers, families and a broad public audience for nature and science.

Over the summer holidays, pupils from all over Austria can take part in a creative competition and win various prizes - whereby they can send in a wide variety of creative contributions to a "project type in typical form" via one of our various media channels. For each of the three age groups (6-10 years; 11-14 years; 15-18 years) the jury will announce the winners in September, who will receive exclusive prizes. The entire project will be accompanied by the media in cooperation with the target groups - for example, when we travel by train to the workshops and press events all over Austria, let the pupils film their own stories, or when we share the entries of the creative competition with the outside world or give interviews.

SOUNDS WILD will not only leave self-made bat detectors in over 100 school classes from all over Austria, but also lasting impressions about birds, bats, nature conservation, sustainability, science, art and technology. Together with the cooperating schools, ambassadors and sponsors such as the [Schönbrunn Zoo](#) and international nature artists such as [Dominik Eulberg](#), we will not only reach future generations, but also current decision-makers - in order to strengthen the knowledge and ability to act of young generations.