



Natural
History
Museum

Fixing Our Broken Planet

A self-build exhibition from
the Natural History Museum, London





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Left: NHM scientist Anne Jungblut sampling biofilms on the McMurdo Ice Shelf (© Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London)

Introduction

The Natural History Museum

One of the world's leading visitor attractions, the Natural History Museum, London (NHM) has welcomed over six million visitors in 2024 and is a leading science research centre. Our vision is of a future where both people and the planet can thrive. To achieve this, we have set a strategy to 2031 that harnesses the powerful combination of our three key assets: our collection of 80 million objects, our scientific research, and our reach to a worldwide audience on our mission to create advocates for the planet.

Touring Exhibitions

The NHM has been touring its pioneering exhibitions since 1990. Our world-renowned displays are seen by millions of visitors all over the world, and include crowd-pleasing dinosaurs, the very best of our unique collection, wildlife photography, immersive experiences and now our brand-new self-build offer.



Right: Façade of the NHM London (© Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London)

FIXING OUR BROKEN PLANET

This is an emergency.
All hands on deck.

We are in a planetary emergency, an unprecedented period in our planet's history. As our demand for food, materials and energy soars, the health of forests and oceans declines and countless species face extinction.

We need a global response. Together, we have the power to make change. We can build more sustainable lifestyles, slow the pace of climate change and restore biodiversity while improving our own health in the process.

The Natural History Museum is at the heart of a growing global community uniting scientific expertise with advocacy for the planet. Together, we can build a future where people and the planet thrive.

Join us.

A groundbreaking
exhibition



A groundbreaking exhibition

Fixing Our Broken Planet (FOBP) is a journey into the planetary emergency through the lens of the natural world. Packed with contemporary science from the NHM's world-leading researchers, this groundbreaking exhibition tells the story of our impact on the natural world and how we can play a part in protecting its future. It explores today's biggest challenges to the health of our planet, as well as to our own health, and reveals science-backed solutions from nature that can help us to create a more sustainable world.

Grouped by the food we eat, the energy we consume, the stuff we use and the impact of all of this on our health, there is a whole host of amazing stories for visitors to discover, from fungi that can be used to fertilise crops to reduce the need for artificial fertilisers, to corals that can be specially bred to survive in warmer climates, from bacteria that can be harnessed to extract copper from mine waste, to how bisons are helping to engineer forests to store more carbon.

Previous page: View of the FOBP exhibition as presented at the NHM London (© Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London)

However, the planetary emergency also demands a global response. And the exhibition is also a place where scientific expertise is combined with the thoughts and lived experiences of a growing community of advocates for the planet. Visitors can hear from environmentalists and changemakers from all over the world about the actions they are taking to speak up for the planet and to better care for its future.



Left: Installation created as part of the FOBP self-build exhibition at the Suwon Convention Centre, South Korea (© Korea Green Foundation).

Right: View of the FOBP exhibition as presented at the NHM London (© Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London).



Left: Opening event of the FOBP self-build exhibition at the Cairo Child Museum, Egypt (© Cairo Child Museum).

Self-build exhibition overview



Self-build exhibition overview

- ✓ 32 extraordinary stories about scientists who are working to find solutions to some of the biggest challenges facing the planet today.
- ✓ A flexible display customisable based on your space, budget and audience requirements.
- ✓ A sustainable exhibition with no transport emissions and no international shipping fees.
- ✓ Content, images, guidelines, and graphics delivered electronically.
- ✓ Opportunities to add new stories that resonate with your local communities.
- ✓ Calls to action and practical tips to make a positive difference to our global future.
- ✓ Empower your audience to take the initiative in the face of the climate emergency.



Right: View of the FOBP exhibition as presented at the NHM London (© Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London)

Exhibition zones



Exhibition zones

The exhibition themes are organised in four main zones, which contain photographic reproductions of objects from the NHM collections, interactives, calls to action and media exhibits.

Zone 1: The Food We Eat

Our diets, and the ways we produce our food are contributing to climate change and are key drivers of biodiversity loss around the globe.

Over thousands of years, our single species has taken a third of the planet's land and transformed it into farms. Simultaneously, we've overfished about a third of global fish stocks.

Luckily, our food habits and the systems that support them can make a difference for the better. Scientists are imagining a world where we can feed our growing population by producing more food on less land, leaving space for nature to thrive.

Scientists at the Natural History Museum are monitoring nature to understand the impact of intensive farming, and enhancing the resilience of crops to survive in our warming climate. Finding solutions will protect our food supplies and the planet.

Zone 1 features 8 stories, each represented by a scientist from the Natural History Museum and showcasing objects from the NHM collections (chosen by the scientists); 1 audio recording of a scientist to accompany their story; 2 infographics and 4 What You Can Do Labels.

Previous page: View of the FOBP exhibition as presented at the Suwon Convention Centre, South Korea (© Korea Green Foundation).

'The idea is to breed wheat that can survive the climate of the future. It needs to produce plenty of food and thrive without being pampered with loads of water, chemical fertilisers and pesticides.'

Matt Clark
Scientist at the Natural History Museum, London



Exhibition zones

Zone 2: The Stuff We Use

Our unsustainable use of materials from the natural world is polluting our planet, damaging habitats and putting species at risk of extinction.

For generations, the world's richest nations have treated Earth like a supermarket, with few limits or constraints. Entire landscapes have been reshaped by resource extraction. And now, for the first time ever, human-made materials weigh more than all living things.

How we take from nature, make the stuff we use and then throw it away has a huge impact. Collectively, we can create an economy that leaves minimal waste, reuses materials and gives back to nature.

Natural History Museum scientists are studying collections to understand the impacts of harmful waste on nature, and are helping to improve recycling to protect finite resources.

Zone 2 features 7 stories, each represented by a scientist from the Natural History Museum and showcasing objects from the NHM collections (chosen by the scientists); 2 audio recordings of scientists to accompany their respective story; 2 infographics and 3 What You Can Do Labels.

'It's currently difficult to extract and recycle cobalt from old batteries on a large scale. We are developing ways to improve the process to cut down the need for newly mined minerals from Africa. Materials like this should be reused, not wasted.'

Agnieszka Dybowska
Scientist at the Natural History Museum, London



Exhibition zones

Zone 3: The Energy We Use

Human activities, including our burning of fossil fuels for energy, are causing a build-up of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere, leading to rapid climate change.

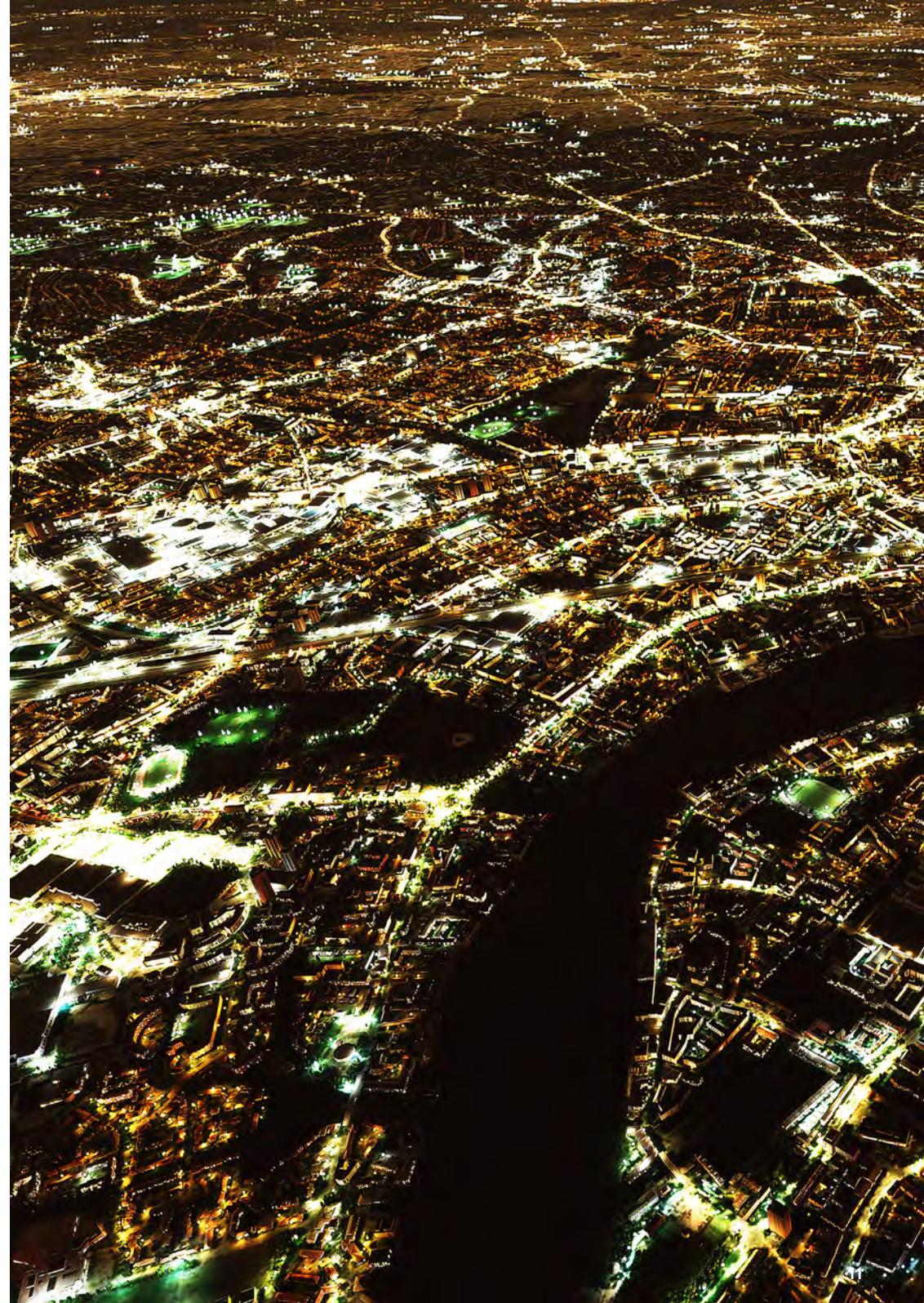
Around 200 years ago we unlocked the power of fossil fuels, which came to dominate energy systems in many countries around the world. Heatwaves and increased flooding are only some of the impacts we're now witnessing as a result of this dependence.

Now, we're shifting to a new system of low-carbon energy, and globally there are more jobs in clean energy than in fossil fuels. But wind and solar energy rely on large quantities of minerals,

and scaling up to meet demand is a massive challenge.

Through collections at the Natural History Museum, scientists are learning more about the resources crucial to getting clean energy to everyone, everywhere.

Zone 3 features 7 stories, each represented by a scientist from the Natural History Museum and showcasing objects from the NHM collections (chosen by the scientists); 3 audio recordings of scientists to accompany their respective story; 2 infographics and 3 What You Can Do Labels.



'We are looking at biomining, a process where bacteria extract valuable metals such as copper from mining and electronic waste. This is a more sustainable, nature-positive alternative to traditional high-temperature smelting.'

Nadia Santodomingo
Scientist at the Natural History Museum, London

Exhibition zones

Zone 4: Our Health

Human activities, including our burning of fossil fuels for energy, are causing a build-up of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere, leading to rapid climate change.

We often think of ourselves as separate from nature, but our health is entangled with the health of every other living thing.

Climate change is already having a devastating impact on the planet and on us. Our bodies, homes and food supplies are harmed by increased temperatures and extreme weather. Destroying natural habitats increases the risk of diseases spreading from wild animals to humans.

Scientists at the Natural History Museum are using its collections to understand the history of disease to help predict and prevent future pandemics. By tackling climate change we will create a healthier future with more green spaces, better air quality and more nutritious food.

Zone 4 features 9 stories, each represented by a scientist from the Natural History Museum and showcasing objects from the NHM collections (chosen by the scientists); 2 audio recordings of scientists to accompany their respective story; 2 infographics and 2 What You Can Do Labels.

‘We have recently studied over 8,000 bat specimens from our collections, extracting genetic material from viruses that lived in the bats hundreds of years ago. By analysing this historical data, we can understand how diseases spread in animals.’

Vince Smith
Scientist at the Natural History Museum, London



Self-build exhibition package



The self-build exhibition package

The self-build model offers you the exceptional opportunity to licence an exhibition developed by the NHM, and tailor it to your needs and requirements, with no minimum hire period or availability constraints.

The package does not include any physical objects or setworks and does not involve NHM staff members travelling to install or dismantle the display. The exhibition concept and all related content, including text, images, graphics, and media files are delivered electronically, with no associated transportation or insurance costs. Hosting venues can then use the assets and guidelines provided to design and build their own unique display, based on their space, audience, and budget.

Partners also have the possibility to add stories that resonate with local audiences and communities into the exhibition, focusing on human impact in their own regions, and with objects sourced from their own collections or borrowed from other museums, universities, and scientific institutions.

What's included in the package:

- > 32 x stories including printable photographs of objects from the NHM collection;
- > 6 x scans of objects for 3D printing
- > 3 x films;
- > 8 x audio recordings;
- > 8 x infographics;
- > 1 x interactive;
- > 11 x action labels;
- > Sample floorplan and 3D renderings;
- > Graphic files for text panels and labels in English language, available as ready-to-print PDFs or as editable files for translations;
- > Marketing guidelines and assets;

Previous page: View of the FOBP exhibition as presented at the Suwon Convention Centre, South Korea (© Korea Green Foundation).



View of the FOBP exhibition as presented at the Suwon Convention Centre, South Korea (© Korea Green Foundation).



View of the FOBP exhibition as presented at the Cairo Child Museum, Egypt (© Cairo Child Museum).

The exhibits at a glance

Join the conversation

How can we help you dig deeper into the planetary emergency?

Take part and see what others think

The exhibits at a glance

Stories

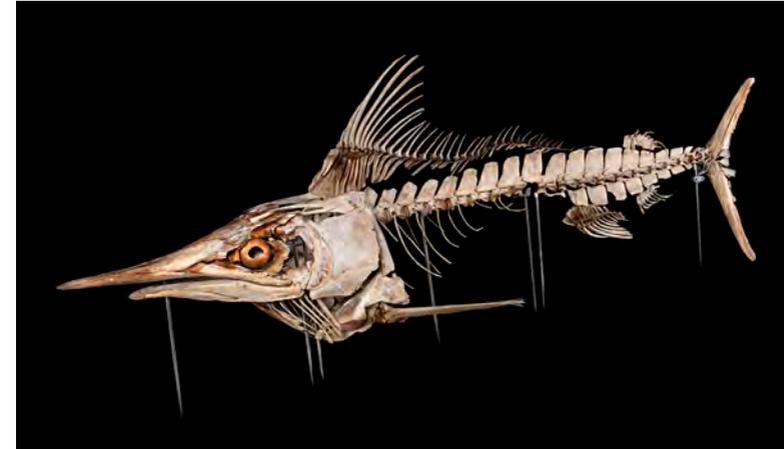
Every one of the 80 million objects in the Natural History Museum's collections tells a story. The specimens which have been selected for the FOBP exhibition were chosen by scientists to show our broken relationship with the natural world and the ways we could repair it.

Natural History Museum scientists learn from museum collections every day. They decode DNA and analyse the physical and chemical make-up of specimens to develop solutions for a healthier planet.

The stories that FOBP tells illustrate these solutions, from breeding climate-resilient crops to sustainably extracting minerals for green technologies. Every one

reveals a secret about our changing world and provides a clue to tackling the problems we face.

Each story is illustrated through one or more high-resolution images of an object or a group of objects, accompanied by a label including a detailed caption, a contextual image, and a quote from an NHM scientist, along with their photo portrait.



Left: Image from the story 'Losing large ocean predators'. Black marlin, *Istiompax indica* (© Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London).

Right: Image from the story 'Brighter nights threaten wildlife'. Brown long-eared bat, *Plecotus auritus* (© Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London).



Fertilising crops with fungi

These plants are being fed by the fungi entwined in their roots. Fungi are natural fertilisers. Most plant species already partner up with some fungi – the fungi help the plants absorb water and nutrients, while the plants provide the fungi with food.

Scientists at the Natural History Museum are studying how this relationship could be harnessed to reduce our reliance on artificial fertilisers when growing crops such as wheat or strawberries. Artificial fertilisers are harmful because producing them generates huge carbon emissions, and using them damages soil and pollutes waterways.

From the collection of the Natural History Museum, London:
Clover roots colonised by a symbiotic fungus



'Nature-based solutions are there for us to harness. Let's turn to them for greener and smarter ways to farm and feed us, while we protect the environment.'

Silvia Pressel
Scientist at the Natural History Museum

Left: Label from the story 'Fertilising crops with fungi' (© Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London).

The exhibits at a glance

Infographics

The exhibition features 8 infographics interspersed throughout the exhibition and supporting the content of the stories. The infographics visually communicate facts, statistics, data or key concepts through graphics and charts that are engaging and easy-to-understand. Some may be provocative and deliberately raise questions for visitors.

All 8 infographics are available in a static format (ready-to-print panels), while 4 of them are also available as animated versions, should hosting venues wish to display these exhibits on screens.

Audio recordings

Eight of the object stories are accompanied by an audio piece, where the scientists who selected the object(s) explain its significance and describe how their research work can contribute to solving the planetary crisis.

Films

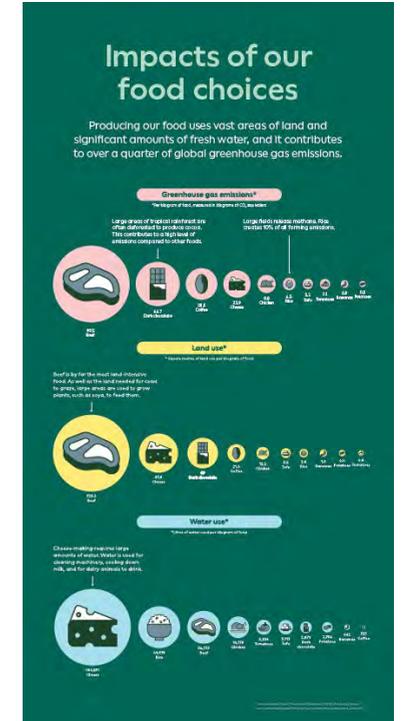
The films play an important role in creating hope and inspiration for visitors. While other exhibits convey information about the state of the planet, the films introduce young changemakers and scientists working in a diverse range of sectors, helping visitors feel they are not alone in taking action for the planet. The films focus on the following topics:

- Why does biodiversity matter? (5'01"")
- Plastic pollution: how it's affecting the planet's wildlife (3'53"")
- Climate emergency (3'45"")



Right: One of the exhibition films as presented at the NHM London (© Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London)

Right: One of the 8 exhibition infographics (© Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London)



Left: Visitor listening to the FOBP audio recordings at the NHM London (© Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London).

The exhibits at a glance

Interactive: Conversation Starter

As the name suggests, the aim of this 'Conversation Starter' interactive is to spark dialogue and discussion amongst visiting groups about some of the key and topical issues facing our planet.

This exhibit asks visitors thought-provoking questions, giving them the opportunity to express and reflect upon personal feelings and opinions and then see how their views fit in with the views of other visitors. Users input their response in a closed system, rather than writing or drawing freely. Questions take a variety of formats including multiple choice, ranking options or binary questions.

Hosting venues can add custom questions to the interactive to gain insights into their own audience's views on climate change and the actions they are willing to take.

Action labels: *What You Can Do*

In addition to learning about the science and stories behind the NHM objects, which form the core focus of the exhibition, visitors are also offered advice on practical

actions they can take through the *What You Can Do* labels. These 'action labels' are placed in specific zones of the exhibition, offering suggestions for actions related to some issues presented in that area. This set of eleven action labels is visually distinct, using a bold, informal, and motivational tone that speaks directly to visitors in the first person. Each label features a young changemaker from around the world, aiming to inspire others to take action in response to the planetary emergency.

Hosting venues can create their own *What You Can Do* labels featuring local voices such as leading environmentalists or young change-makers.

Right: One of the exhibition *What You Can Do* labels (© Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London).



Right: Visitors using the FOBP Conversation Starter interactive at the NHM London (© Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London).

What you can do

Grow pollinating plants, such as lavender, on your windowsill.

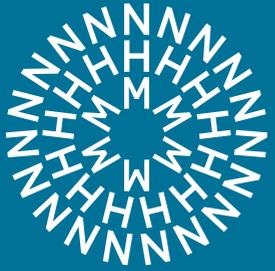
'Our group meets weekly on our school grounds for gardening and other eco activities to boost green space, grow vegetables, look after our bees and produce a garden for the RHS Tatton flower show. Our school is one of hundreds of schools improving biodiversity and pollinator habitat across the country.'

Robert, Conrad and Charlie
Manchester, UK

Wellacre Academy is a secondary school in Manchester with a thriving Eco Hub. The school uses the Natural History Museum's National Education Nature Park resources to help students experience nature.



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Natural
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