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Environmental Conservation

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Environmental Conservation

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internet reviews

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

BY JENNIFER A. BARTLETT

INTERIM ASSOCIATE DEAN OF TEACHING, LEARNING, & RESEARCH • UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY LIBRARIES

“And I dream of the vast deserts, the forests, and all of the wilderness of our continent, wild places that we should protect as a precious heritage for our children and for our children’s children. We must never forget that it is our duty to protect this environment.”

– Nelson Mandela

Environmental conservation involves the care and protection of Earth’s natural resources, including air, water, soil, plants, minerals, and wildlife. Learning about the world’s ecosystems is an essential first step towards preservation of natural species, maintaining good air and water quality, and improving our health and

quality of life. While new online resources devoted to conservation topics appear regularly, the following websites offering general information, news, and children’s activities are a good place to start.

GENERAL CONSERVATION SITES



Climate.gov
<https://www.climate.gov>

Maintained by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Climate.gov offers a wealth of scientific information, data, and news about climate and energy topics, including the greenhouse effect, causes of climate change, solar radiation, fossil fuels, deforestation, and more. With thousands of articles, news stories, videos, graphs, maps, and photos, this site is an excellent introduction for learning the basics about a wide variety of climate topics.

The site’s content is divided into three sections, each targeted at a different primary audience. “News & Features” is a general public-oriented news magazine organized into featured articles, news and research highlights, climate case studies, and climate technology, among others. The “Maps & Data” tab offers reusable climate maps, past weather by zip code, temperate and precipitation trends, a Climate Data Primer, dataset gallery, and GIA Data Locator. The “Teaching Climate” section provides over 500 curated climate education resources for K-12 through a partnership with the Climate Literacy and Energy Awareness Network (<https://cleanet.org>). All resources are tagged not only by subject keyword, but also by national science education standard and grade level.

Special features include a Global Climate Dashboard with worldwide information about average temperatures, snow cover, sea levels, carbon dioxide levels, and more. The Climate Data Primer is an educational resource introducing

readers to the basics of weather and climate observation. Clicking on the Site Map section brings up a complete list of topics that are regularly monitored by Climate.gov, each with a separate RSS feed. A companion site, the U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit (<https://toolkit.climate.gov>), is geared towards community policymakers and stakeholders with tips for planning, case studies, tools, reports, free training courses, and more.



**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Endangered Species**
<https://www.fws.gov/endangered>

This government agency's mission is to "work with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people." A valuable tool

supporting that mission is the Endangered Species website, the first place to look for continuously changing lists of endangered and threatened plant and animal species in the U.S. and territories. The Environmental Conservation Online System (ECOS) enables users to search species by state and county, as well as by species name. Clicking on a name brings up an information sheet with a photo and range map, general information, and population details, as well as links to relevant documents in the U.S. *Federal Register* and other publications.

Specific species records also link to the NatureServe Explorer Species Reports, Integrated Taxonomic Information System (IT IS), and the Fish & Wildlife Service's National Digital Library, a searchable collection of images, historical artifacts, and audiovisual materials. Other site features include: "What's in Your Backyard?", a collection of state-specific endangered species news and success stories; tax and planning documents for landowners; laws and policies; and homework help including species information, images, and an interactive game.



**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Environmental Topics**
<https://www.epa.gov/environmental-topics>

This plain, no-nonsense site offers a treasure trove of environmental information from the U.S. government in the categories of air; chemicals and toxics; greener living, health; land, waste, and cleanup; science; and water. Location-specific information includes features such as air quality by zip code, local watershed projects, community cleanup sites, and local environmental data. An A-Z topic index provides an overview of specific subjects for quick reference. An associated "Law & Regulations" section lists regulatory information by topic and sector, along with links to relevant laws, guidance documents, and enforcement.



National Geographic – Environment
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment>

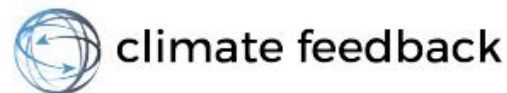
Since 1888, the National Geographic Society has supported explorations in natural science across all seven continents. Its print magazine, *National Geographic*, has one of the most recognizable covers in the world, featuring cultural and natural scenes from all over the world and has been published continuously since the Society's founding. Now, the National Geographic online offerings are just as impressive. National Geographic Environment features stunning photographs and videos accompanying stories on topics including climate change, wildfires, pollution, weather, and more.

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS



Reuters Environment News
<https://www.reuters.com/subjects/environment>

Reuters is well-known for its current events, financial, and business journalism, and with the Environment page it expands its impressive journalistic coverage of climate and environmental news as well. This site collects stories and special reports from Reuters reporters across the globe in the areas energy and science, weather, climate adaptation, and environmental politics.



Climate Feedback
<https://climatefeedback.org>

Supported by donations, the non-profit fact-checking site Climate Feedback is "a worldwide network of scientists sorting fact from fiction in climate change media coverage. Our goal is to help readers know which news to trust." To that end, the site's reviewers analyze recent environmental articles and claims for clarity and credibility, providing not only context for the article but extensive comments and annotations. The site is one part of the non-partisan Science Feedback network, which also includes a Health Feedback site.



Inside Climate News

<https://insideclimatenews.org>

Founded in 2007, InsideClimate News is an independent, nonprofit news agency that covers clean energy, carbon energy, nuclear energy, and environmental science, focusing on "the territory in between where law, policy and public opinion are shaped." The site not only includes current environmental news, but also in-depth investigative reports, topic overviews, an "Inside Clean Energy" blog, and documentary videos. The Infographics section is browsable by topic (climate denial, regulation, activism, etc.) and keyword searchable.

The organization's National Environment Reporting Network connects journalists working on climate and environment stories across the nation (there's a regional hub in Louisville). "We are staffed by professional journalists, many of whom bring decades of experience from leading media organizations in the nation, including the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *ProPublica*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Bloomberg News* and *Frontline*," the site says. "We have earned national recognition for our work and many of the most prestigious awards in journalism, including the Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting."

SITES FOR KIDS



Planetpals

<http://www.planetpals.com>

Planetpals appeared in 1998 with the mission to "engage kids to think about their world, their health and relationships with slogan such as 'Be Healthy Inside and Out.'" This website is packed with environmental education resources targeted at preschoolers through tweens, and includes crafts, puzzles, games, email cards, holiday ideas, and more. The Learning Helpers section offers resources for parents and teachers such as book lists, lesson plans, and downloads.

This busy website can be confusing to navigate given its crowded design and organization. The typeface for most links is quite small and outside advertisements often appear to be part of the site's content. Further, some of the material and newsletters have not been updated recently. Regardless, Planetpals has a wealth of environmental education content that's both useful and fun.

Wild Kratts

<https://pbskids.org/wildkratts>



Geared toward six- to eight-year-olds, the Wild Kratts website introduces kids to environmental science topics through their interest in animals. Video-based games focus on animal behavior and characteristics, ecosystems, extinction, and other topics. The Creaturepedia section offers videos categorized by group, geographical region, and habitat, and there are also resources for teachers such as lesson plans and graphic organizers in English and Spanish. The Parents section includes fun ideas for a Wild Kratts-themed birthday party, and hands-on crafts and recipes, as well as games and apps. The site also features full episodes and video clips from the popular PBS show.

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