

## Protect Earth's Species



image by Elizabeth Haslam

**Mini Quote:**  
"In nature, nothing exists alone."  
— Rachel Carson

Earth Day is celebrated every year on April 22. This year is the 49th anniversary of the first Earth Day, in 1970.

For 2019, the Earth Day Network has named "Protect Our Species" as the theme. Let's learn more about how to conserve important species on our planet.

**What is extinction?**

An animal or plant that is **extinct** no longer exists anywhere in the world. It is usually considered extinct when the last living individual dies.

It is normal for some species to become extinct. Normally, about one to five species will become extinct each year.

But now, partly because of human activity, we are losing species 1,000 to 10,000 times faster. The planet loses multiple species on a daily basis. Some examples are:

**Insects:** There are many fewer insects than there were just 30 years ago. This is a problem because birds and other animals rely on insects for food, and bees and other insects pollinate wild plants.

**Primates:** Almost 60 percent of the primates, or apes and monkeys, in the world (like the langur monkeys shown above) are threatened with extinction.

**Birds:** About 40 percent of bird species are losing population.

**Marine mammals:** Fishing operations are affecting the populations of dolphins, whales and porpoises all around the world.

**Why are we losing species?**

There are many reasons why species are disappearing.

**Overexploitation**, or overuse, of animals or plants — for example, hunting animals for food or sport, or cutting down trees to make paper.

**Habitat loss**, such as building roads and buildings for humans that remove wild areas where animals live. This also includes polluting areas like rivers and lakes where animals make their homes.

**Climate change**, which changes weather patterns and temperatures so that animals and plants have to adapt or migrate.

**Chemical use**, usually in farming, which affects people and animals who eat the food and drink the water that chemicals have entered.



images courtesy Earth Day Network

**Two examples**

Let's look more closely at two examples of living beings that are disappearing.

**Insects**

You might at first be glad to hear that bugs are becoming extinct. After all, they can be annoying pests, making us swat and itch.

But without insects, we wouldn't have food! For example: Flowers and other plants and trees have to be pollinated in order to produce more seeds. If plants can't grow, we don't have wheat for bread, or grass to feed cows, which we eat as beef. We don't have fruit, which grows on trees or vines.

You can help by using **organic** products, which have been grown or produced without pesticides and herbicides. You can grow plants that are native to your area, which will attract and feed insects.

**Whales**

Whales are fun to watch, but they also contribute a lot to our environment. They recycle nutrients such as iron in sea water. They also help create the oxygen we breathe by supporting phytoplankton.

You can help whales by preventing ocean pollution. For example, help keep plastic out of the ocean by using reusable water bottles or cleaning up a beach. Ask your parents not to use toxic fertilizers on the lawn and garden.

### Resources

**On the Web:**

- [bit.ly/MPEarthDay](https://bit.ly/MPEarthDay)
- [bit.ly/EarthDay2019](https://bit.ly/EarthDay2019)

## Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of Earth Day are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:

ACTIVITY, BIRDS, CHEMICAL, CLIMATE, CONSERVE, DAY, EARTH, EXTINCT, HABITAT, HUMAN, INSECTS, LOSS, MAMMALS, MARINE, ORGANIC, PLANET, PRIMATES, PROTECT, SPECIES, THREATENED.

S R D Y A D D C O N S E R V E  
P G D Q B Z E C C I N A G R O  
E T C T Y M N T C N I T X E S  
C A L C T A E X M A R I N E E  
I T I E I M T I N S E C T S N  
E I M T V M A Y A P L A N E T  
S B A O I A E C H E M I C A L  
F A T R T L R U B I H T R A E  
B H E P C S H M R T H U M A N  
S S O L A Q T P B I R D S R Z

## Cook's Corner

### Kiwi Fruit Salad

**You'll need:**

- 3 ripe kiwi fruits
- 1 medium banana
- 1 (8-ounce) can pineapple chunks, drained (reserve juice)
- 1 lime
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

**What to do:**

1. Peel and cut kiwis into bite-size chunks. Place in bowl.
2. Peel and slice banana. Add to bowl. Add pineapple chunks to bowl, reserving juice.
3. Pour reserved pineapple juice into small saucepan. Add juice of one lime and brown sugar. Heat mixture to boiling, then lower heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Add vanilla after 5 minutes.
4. Pour sauce mixture over fruit. Stir gently to coat fruit with sauce. Serve warm or cold. Serves 2.

\* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

1. Soil where vegetables, flowers and fruit grow (6-letter noun)

□ □ □ □ □ □

2. The fifth-largest planet in our solar system (5-letter noun)

□ □ □ □ □

3. Remains of ancient plants and animals (6-letter noun)

□ □ □ □ □ □

4. To process paper, cans and glass to reuse them (7-letter verb)

□ □ □ □ □ □ □


1. Mrs. Dunn's class created a tomato \_\_\_\_\_ with 10 plants.

2. Does Stevie know that the \_\_\_\_\_ is round?

3. The \_\_\_\_\_ of a beetle was in a large, hard stone.

4. Molly and Greta \_\_\_\_\_ newspapers every day.

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Study the definition. When you know the missing word, fill in the letter boxes and the sentence blanks.

Answers: Garden, Earth, Fossil, Recycle.

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## Mini Jokes

**Alex:** How do you record a monkey's voice?

**Adam:** With an ape recorder!

## Eco Note

A new study finds that Earth's insect population is undergoing a "catastrophic collapse" due to habitat loss and insecticide use, with nearly half of all species worldwide in rapid decline. Researchers found that bees, ants and beetles are disappearing eight times faster than birds, reptiles and mammals. Since many of the vanishing species pollinate crops, replenish soils and provide food for other creatures, their disappearance could trigger a global ecological disaster.

adapted with permission from Earthweek.com

## For later:

Look in your newspaper for Earth Day events in your community.

## Teachers:

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