

Earth Day 2019

What Is Earth Day?

Earth Day is held every year on 22nd April. It is an event celebrated all over the world and its aim is to look after the planet's **environment**. It first began in 1970 in America but now, Earth Day is celebrated in over 192 countries.

In 2019, the theme for Earth Day is 'Protect Our **Species**'. Sadly, much of the world's plant and animal life is in danger of becoming **extinct**. The speed at which animals and plants are now becoming extinct is alarming. Scientists say that it hasn't been this bad since the dinosaurs died out more than 60 million years ago. The cause for this mass extinction? Humans.



Climate change, **deforestation**, loss of habitat, rises in sea level, pollution, hunting and poaching are just some of the ways in which humans have affected the world's environments. Many species are in decline as a result of human activity.

The organisers of Earth Day are worried that humans will be remembered for wiping out many of the planet's species. They believe that all living things have a special role to play on Earth. As soon as a species is made extinct, everything becomes unbalanced.

Earth Day Facts

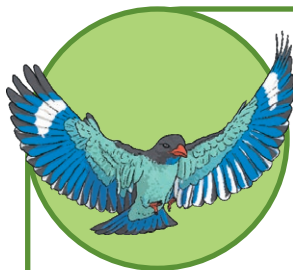


Extinction

Usually, between one and five species will become extinct every year. However, scientists believe that this has increased to 10,000 times the normal rate. In fact, many species are becoming extinct every single day.

Insects

A recent study showed that insect numbers are down by 75% in some places. Most wild plants rely on insects for pollination and most bird species need them for food. Without the same number of insects, many plants won't grow and bird numbers will drop.



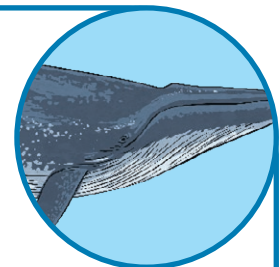
Animals

Human activity has caused half of Earth's wild animals to disappear. The numbers of many bird species are dropping and some birds are facing extinction. Other animals are in decline as well and big cats, like tigers and leopards, will become extinct in the next ten years. Plus, nearly half of all lizard species will be extinct by 2080.



Oceans

Over 650,000 ocean mammals, like whales and dolphins, are caught or hurt by fishing gear every year. In the past 20 years alone, almost three quarters of all whale species have been affected.



The Future

On the bright side, many scientists believe we can still do something about protecting Earth's species. They argue that a lot of the animals and plants at risk can recover if people work together. This year, Earth Day organisers want people to join their 'Protect Our Species' campaign. Their aims are to:

- teach people about how many of Earth's species are facing extinction;
- encourage governments to protect threatened species and their habitats;
- change peoples' attitudes to nature, encouraging people to understand the importance of all the world's animals and plants;
- encourage people to try to change their ways in order to help the environment.

How You Can Help

Ask your parents not to use **insect-killing** products in the house or outside.



Reduce your use of plastics.



Tell people about Earth Day and the problems facing our animals and our plants.



Plant some trees.



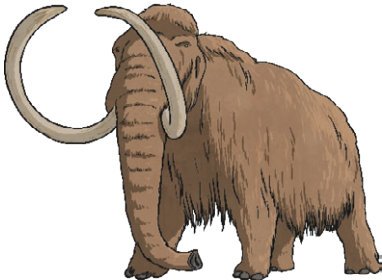
Walk to school.



Eat less meat.



Glossary

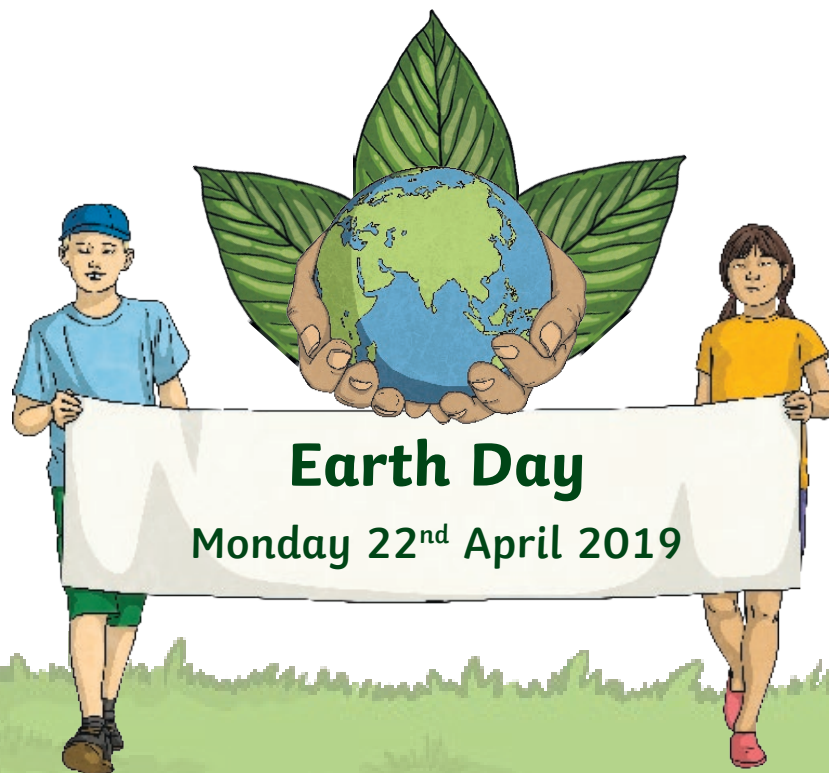
Term	Definition
Deforestation 	Clearing a wide area of trees – such as chopping down large sections of the Earth's rainforests.
Environment 	The natural world, either as a whole or as a particular physical area.
Extinct 	When a species dies out.
Species 	A group of animals, plants or other living things that all share common characteristics and are able to reproduce together.

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Held every year on 22nd April, Earth Day is a worldwide event that focuses on protecting the planet's environment. It first began in 1970 in America but now, Earth Day is celebrated in over 192 countries.

In 2019, the theme for Earth Day is 'Protect Our Species'. Unfortunately, much of the world's plant and animal life is in danger of becoming extinct. We are living through the biggest period of species extinction since the dinosaurs died out more than 60 million years ago. Scientists argue about why the dinosaurs disappeared but the cause of Earth's current mass extinction is clear: humans are to blame!



The rapid decline in both plant and animal populations is directly linked to human activity. Climate change, deforestation, habitat loss, sea level rises, modern farming methods, pollution, hunting and poaching are just some of the ways in which humans have had a negative impact on the world's environment. The speed at which animals and plants are now becoming extinct is alarming.

The organisers of Earth Day say that humans might be best remembered for wiping out a large percentage of the planet's species. They believe that all living things have a special role to play on Earth. As soon as a species becomes extinct, the entire ecosystem becomes unbalanced.

Earth Day Facts

Species Extinction

We are currently living through the largest period of species extinction since the dinosaurs died out. Usually, between one and five species will naturally become extinct every year. However, scientists believe that we are now losing them at up to 10,000 times the normal rate. In fact, it is so extreme, many species are becoming extinct every single day.



Three Quarters of Insects Gone

A recent study in Germany showed that insect populations are down by 75% compared to 28 years ago. If this is the same for the rest of the world, then it could be disastrous. 80% of wild plants rely on insects, like bees, for pollination. In addition, 60% of bird species need insects for food. Without the same number of insects, many plants will not grow and bird numbers will drop.



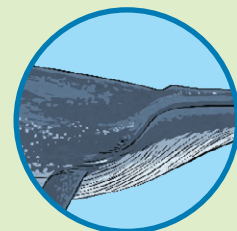
Animals

Climate change, deforestation and other forms of habitat destruction are responsible for the loss of half of Earth's wild animals. Currently, 40% of the planet's bird species are decreasing and just under 13% are facing extinction. Many species of monkeys and apes are in decline and big cats, like tigers and leopards, will become extinct in the next decade.



Oceans

Over 650,000 marine mammals, like whales and dolphins, are caught or hurt by fishing gear every year. In the past 20 years alone, 65% - 75% of all whale species have been affected.



The Future

On the bright side, many scientists believe that we can still do something about protecting Earth's species. They argue that a large proportion of the world's declining, threatened and endangered animals and plants can recover if people work together. This year, the organisers of Earth Day want people to join their 'Protect Our Species' campaign. Their aims are to:

- educate people about how many of Earth's species are facing extinction and to raise awareness of this around the world;
- encourage governments to agree to protect threatened species and their habitats;
- change peoples' attitudes to nature, encouraging people to understand the importance of all the world's animals and plants;
- urge people to change their ways to help the environment.

Ways You Can Help

Encourage your parents not to use insect-killing products in the house, nor outside pesticides.



Reduce your use of plastics.



Tell people about Earth Day and the problems facing our animals and our plants.



Plant some trees.



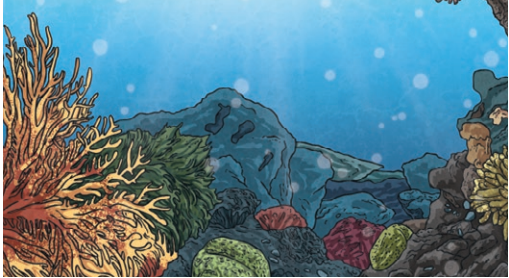
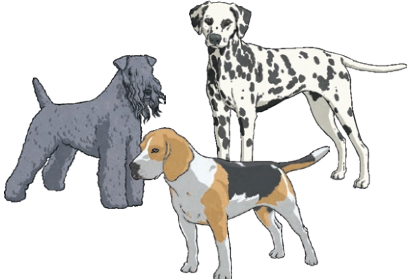
Walk to school.



Eat less meat.



Glossary

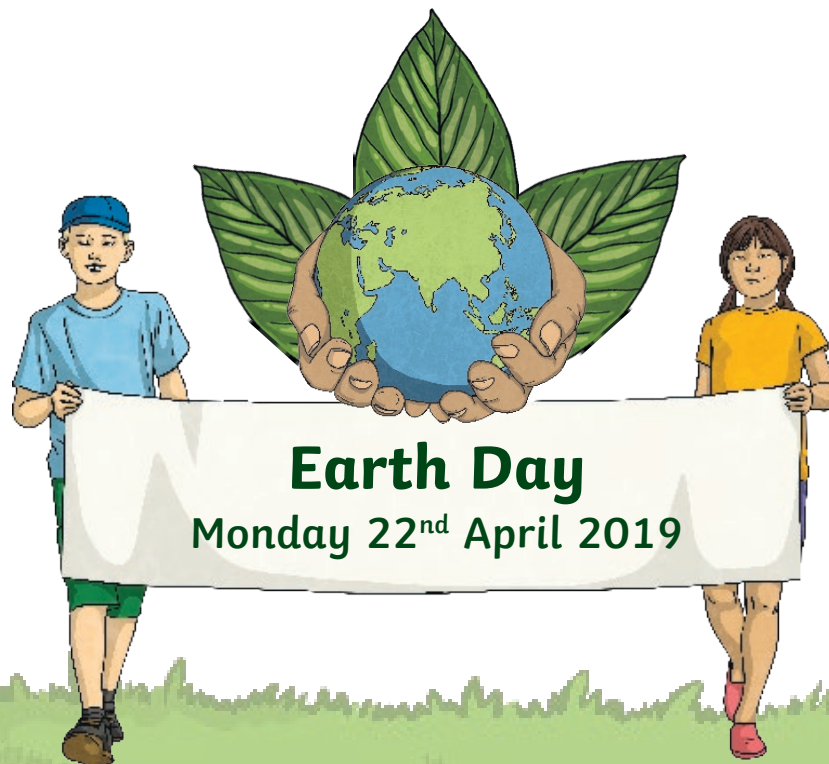
Term	Definition
Ecosystem 	A community of interacting plants and animals within a particular environment.
Environment 	The natural world, either as a whole or as a particular physical area.
Species 	A group of animals, plants or other living things that all share common characteristics and are able to reproduce together.

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Held annually on 22nd April, Earth Day is a worldwide event that focuses on protecting the planet's environment. Founded in 1970, Earth Day is now celebrated in over 192 countries.

In 2019, the theme for Earth Day is 'Protect Our Species'. Unfortunately, the world is facing the greatest rate of species extinction since the dinosaurs died out more than 60 million years ago. Although scientists argue over why the dinosaurs disappeared, the cause of the current mass extinction is clear: humans are to blame!



The unparalleled global destruction and rapid decline in plant and animal populations are directly linked to human activity. Climate change, deforestation, habitat loss, sea level rises, unsustainable farming methods and the use of pesticides, pollution, animal trafficking, hunting and poaching are just some of the ways in which humans have had a negative impact on the world's environment and on living creatures.

The organisers of Earth Day say that mankind's 'most enduring legacy' might be how humans wiped out a large percentage of the planet's species. The organisers believe that all living things have a special role to play in Earth's complex web of life. As soon as a species becomes extinct, the entire ecosystem becomes unbalanced.

Earth Day Facts



Species Extinction

We are currently living through the largest period of species extinction since the dinosaurs were wiped from our planet. Naturally, between one and five species will become extinct annually; it is how the world has worked for millions of years. However, scientists believe that we are now losing species at up to 10,000 times the normal rate. In fact, the rate is so extreme, many species are going extinct every single day.

Three Quarters of Insects Gone

A recent study in Germany showed that insect populations have declined by more than 75% over the last 28 years. If this trend is similar to what is happening in the rest of the world then the implications are ominous. Around 80% of wild plants rely on insects – including many species of bees – for pollination. In addition, 60% of bird species need insects for food. Without the same number of insects, many plants will not continue to grow and bird numbers will drop.



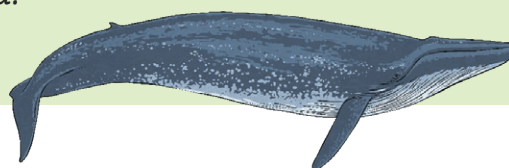
Animals

Climate change, deforestation and other forms of habitat destruction are responsible for the loss of half of Earth's wild animals. Currently, 40% of the planet's bird species are decreasing and just under 13% are facing extinction. Primates, such as gorillas and orangutans, are facing a particularly uncertain future; around 75% of all primate species are in severe population decline. Many big cats, such as tigers, leopards and cheetahs, might become extinct in the next decade and 40% of all lizard species could be extinct by 2080.



Oceans

Over 650,000 marine mammals are caught or hurt by fishing gear every year. Cetaceans have been particularly affected. In the last two decades alone, roughly 75% of all toothed whale species, like dolphins and porpoises and 65% of baleen whales, such as the blue whale, have been adversely affected.



The Future

On the bright side, many scientists believe we can still do something about protecting Earth's species. They argue that a large proportion of the world's declining, threatened and endangered animals and plants can recover if people work together. This year, the organisers of Earth Day want people to join their 'Protect Our Species' campaign. Their aims are to:

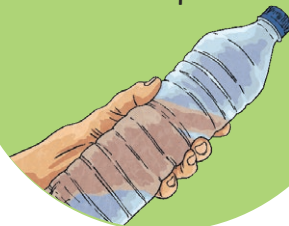
- educate people about the rapid rate of extinction facing millions of Earth's species and to raise awareness around the world;
- encourage governments to agree to protect threatened species and their habitats;
- create a world ethos that embraces and values the importance of nature;
- inspire people to act in ways that could help the planet, such as encouraging people to reduce their meat consumption and take up a more plant-based diet.

Ways You Can Help

Encourage your parents not to use insect-killing products in the house, nor outside pesticides.



Reduce your plastic consumption.



Inform people about Earth Day and the problems facing our animals and our plants.



Plant some trees.



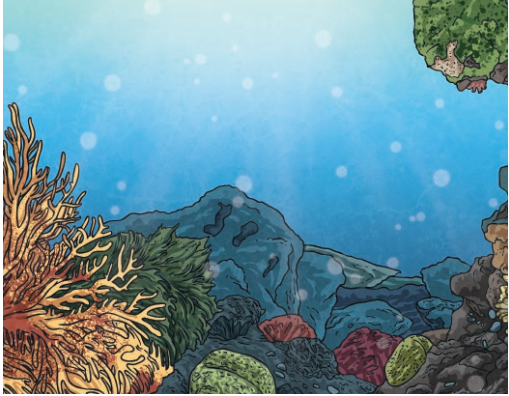
Walk to school.



Eat less meat.



Glossary

Term	Definition
Cetacean 	Marine mammal of the Cetacea family, such as whale, dolphin or porpoise.
Ecosystem 	A community of interacting plants and animals within a particular environment.