

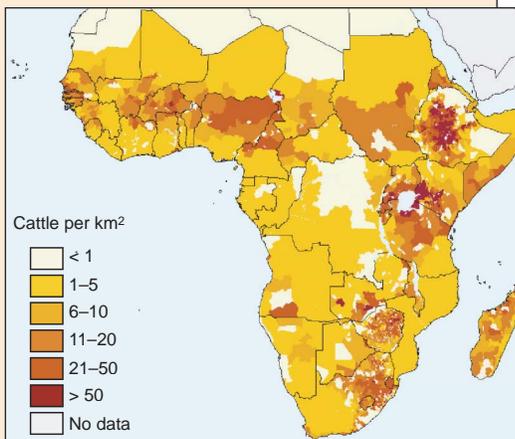
DATABASE

Environmental Trendspotting

EarthTrends is a mother lode of environmental information, allowing visitors to mine data in 10 categories, from climate change to agriculture to biodiversity protection. The massive compendium comes from the World Resources Institute in Washington, D.C., and stocks facts and figures from the World Bank, the U.S. Geological Survey, a host of United Nations agencies, and other sources.

Click on coastal and marine ecosystems, for example, to net values for more than 30 fisheries-related variables, from amount of crustaceans harvested to number of threatened fish species. You can track down extremely specific details, such as Poland's sulfur dioxide emissions in 1995 (4 million tons). The site also allows you to organize data by region or globally and to display them on maps (right, cattle density in Africa).

earthtrends.wri.org



RESOURCES

Gauging the World's Liquid Assets

Agriculture guzzles more than 70% of the fresh water that humans use. To get the lowdown on agricultural water needs and supplies for different regions or countries, dive into AQUASTAT from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. Reports summarize water availability and use in more than 140 nations. For statistics on a particular country, search the database, which provides details such as the amount of renewable water and how much goes into irrigation.

www.fao.org/waicent/faoinfo/agricult/agl/aglw/aquastat/main/index.stm

RESOURCES

Hot Spots for a Warming Planet

Global warming typifies an environmental problem that transcends borders. This portal from the United Nations Environment Programme* is a good starting point for scientists, policy-makers, and neophytes looking for information on climate change. Readers can browse a slew of reports from the U.N. and other organizations that tally the evidence that carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other humanmade gases are contributing to global warming and probe its possible consequences on health, forests, and biodiversity. If you're baffled by climate change lingo, check out the glossary in six languages.

Researchers hankering for data on global change can troll this compendium† from Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee. Scores of key data sets range from monthly CO₂ emissions from fossil fuel use around the world to temperature records for the last 2000 years based on Antarctic ice cores. You can also peruse the famous CO₂ measurements from Mauna Loa, Hawaii, where soaring levels since 1958 first brought the greenhouse gas buildup to scientists' attention.

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* climatechange.unep.net

† cdiac.esd.ornl.gov/trends/trends.htm



Thirty-five years ago, ecologist Garrett Hardin published in *Science* his famous essay "The Tragedy of the Commons," the subject of this week's special issue (p. 1906). Hardin argued that the unbridled pursuit of self-interest inevitably leads to destruction of communal resources such as fisheries and grazing land. This week, NetWatch highlights sites that track the status of our shared resources. For more about Hardin himself—who remained a gadfly, championing restrictions on immigration and decrying foreign aid—try this site from the Garrett Hardin Society: www.garretthardinsociety.org. You'll find additional related Web links at *Science* Online's home page for our recent State of the Planet series: www.sciencemag.org/sciext/sotp

RESOURCES

Head Counts

The growing human population is taxing the world's shared resources. Although the world's population has nearly doubled since 1968 to 6.3 billion, the growth rate has fallen from just over 2% per year to 1.3%. To dig up more demographic facts and figures, check out this pair of sites.

The Data Finder at the Population Reference Bureau* in Washington, D.C., caches information on more than 220 countries. You can find out the latest estimates for 95 population variables, from birth rate to literacy. To peer into the past or glimpse the future, visit this site from the United Nations.† Click on "Data" to access statistics from the latest version of its *World Population Prospects* report, which provides 28 demographic measures from as far back as 1950, as well as projections

out to 2050. For instance, the site forecasts that the world's population in 2050 will fall between 7.4 billion and 12.8 billion.

* www.prb.org

† www.un.org/popin



Send site suggestions to netwatch@aaas.org. Archive: www.sciencemag.org/netwatch