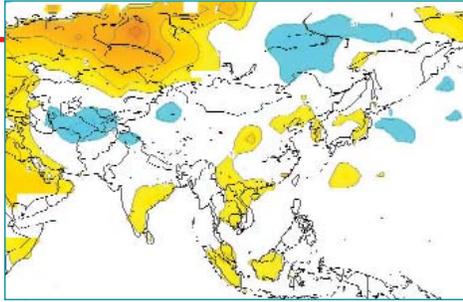


edited by Mitch Leslie

DATABASE

Once and Future Climate



Suppose you want to gather historical rainfall statistics for Brazil or check up on ocean temperatures in the Pacific to see if a new El Niño is brewing. Just click on the Web home of the International Research Institute for Climate Prediction at Columbia University in New York City, a storehouse of climate data and analysis. The site offers seasonal climate forecasts, while the monthly Climate Digest discusses the impact of current weather around the world and predicts changes for the next 3 months. Download an armload of maps, such as May's deviations from average temperature over Asia (above). The more than 300 data sets from various government agencies, universities, and individual researchers cover everything from cloud thickness to the composition of Arctic ice cores.

iri.columbia.edu

ENCYCLOPEDIA

Meeting of the Mindsets

Philosophers and scientists have long inspired one another, swapped ideas, and sometimes clashed. Explore the results of this interchange at the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy edited by Edward Zalta. Topics include a host of thinkers, ideas, and works that made an impact on science, along with scientific discoveries and approaches that shaped philosophy. Experts from around the world write the entries and keep them up to date.

You can read up on the work of Karl Popper, the influential Vienna-born philosopher who in the mid-1900s insisted that instead of being provable, scientific hypotheses must be falsifiable—disprovable by experiments or observations. Or delve into the mind-bending implications of the “many worlds” interpretation of quantum mechanics, which posits the existence of multiple parallel worlds in which all possible quantum outcomes play out. The encyclopedia has grown from two articles in 1995 to hundreds and is still expanding; future entries will tackle topics such as sociobiology, artificial intelligence, and Aristotle’s work on physics.

plato.stanford.edu/

RESOURCES

Reap the Wind

Don Quixote would quickly run out of lances in Denmark, a country that produces about 15% of its power with windmills. This site sponsored by the Danish Wind Industry Association promises to teach visitors everything they want to know about wind power “short of becoming wind engineers.” Breeze through the site’s FAQ or dive into in-depth discussions of engineering, turbine location, economics, and environmental benefits and costs. For example, turbines with one or two blades are cheaper and lighter than the three-bladed models, but they are noisier and must spin faster to produce the same amount of energy. Although



wind power is pollution-free compared with fossil fuels, it does take a toll on the environment. The whirling blades kill birds, the site notes, but far fewer than fall victim to cars and powerlines.

www.windpower.org/en/core.htm

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



IMAGES

Mexico’s Eco-Extravaganza

Mexico boasts ecosystems that range from mountain pine forests and searing deserts to humid rainforests, and it nurtures prodigious biodiversity. The country ranks second in number of mammal species, fourth in vascular plants, and first in reptiles, with 717 types of scaly creatures, most of them found nowhere else. Meet some of Mexico’s rich flora and fauna at this image-packed site, hosted by Viva Natura, a conservation organization based in Puerto Vallarta. Species profiles introduce the habits and habitats of more than 60 Mexican animals, from the black bear (*Ursus americanus*) to less prominent denizens such as these inquisitive sliders (*Trachemys scripta*, above). Photo and sound collections let you hear as well as see many of these creatures, while other galleries spirit you away to some of the country’s imperiled habitats.

www.vivanatura.org

CREDITS: (TOP TO BOTTOM) INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR CLIMATE PREDICTION; PETR. MYSKA/VIVA NATURA; CORBIS