



RESOURCES

Doorway Into North America's Past

Curious about what creatures wandered Texas during the Permian period? Looking for advice on paleontology careers or a good online paleobotany lab? Step into the Paleontology Portal, a new collection of links, photos, teaching materials, and more aimed at everyone from fossil enthusiasts to professional scientists.

The site from the University of California Museum of Paleontology, the Paleontological Society, and other organizations is still under construction, but it already offers some nice features. You can read up on nine famous fossil locales, such as the 500-million-year-old Burgess Shale of British Columbia, which boasts one of the richest assortments of early animals. Browse the "Exploring Time and Space" section to see representative finds for different U.S. states and time periods. This 12-centimeter-long shark's tooth (above), for example, comes from Tertiary rock (65 million to 1.8 million years old) in California. You can also get in-fo on careers, laws regulating fossil collection, and upcoming conferences. Or help build the collection by submitting materials.

www.paleoportol.org

DATABASE

The Price of Misfortune

Rivers turning to blood and mass die-offs of firstborn sons are pretty rare these days, but wildfires, droughts, floods, hailstorms, and other disasters continue to take a toll. SHELDUS, a database from hazards researcher Susan Cutter of the University of South Carolina, Columbia, and colleagues, tallies the costs of U.S. disasters from 1960 through 2000. Pick a state or county to find the number of injuries and fatalities and the economic losses caused by particular events.

go2.cla.sc.edu/hazard/db_registration

EDUCATION

Cool Off and Probe Some DNA

Learn which actions would bring the biggest reductions in U.S. emissions of planet-warming carbon dioxide. Scan DNA samples for mutations that might cause hemochromatosis, a disease of excess iron in the blood. These are just two of the activities that students 13 and older can try at the Web site of the new Marian Koshland Science Museum, which opened last month at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C. The online annex's text displays and Flash animations offer a taste of the museum's exhibits on DNA applications and global warming. For instance, an emissions calculator reveals that boosting automobile efficiency by 10% would trim carbon dioxide release twice as much as raising industrial efficiency 10% would.

www.koshlandsciencemuseum.org

EXHIBITS

A Real Page-Turner

Scottish artist Elizabeth Blackwell painted medical plants such as the bear's breech and fig (below) in hopes of earning enough cash to spring her feckless husband from debtor's prison. She succeeded, and her beautifully illustrated *A Curious Herbal* (1737–39) became a staple among doctors and apothecaries. Peruse selections from the herbal and two other science-related books at "Turning the Pages," a new Web exhibit showcasing rare works from the British Library in London. Thanks to some nifty graphics, you can flip from page to page almost as if you held the real book in your hands. Other offerings include the library's Leonardo da Vinci Notebook, a collection of optical sketches, plans for a new city, and other jottings that the premier Renaissance man began in 1508, and *On the Fabric of the Human Body* (1543), by the pioneering anatomist Andreas Vesalius. The site also supplies audio narration and a mirror to read Leonardo's right-to-left scrawl.

www.bl.uk/collections/treasures/digitisation1.html



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Turtles on the Go

After being outfitted with a satellite transmitter last July, Fluffy, a female loggerhead (below), swam more than 4300 kilometers up and down the North Carolina coast before the transmitter failed in January. Enthusiasts and researchers alike can learn more about



satellite tracking of turtles at this site from the nonprofit organization Seaturtle.org. You can download charts of the wanderings and photos of individual animals that researchers are following as part of 10 projects around the world. The site also offers tools and advice for scientists, such as software for making Geographic Information Systems maps and summaries of different tagging methods. For example, plastic or metal flipper

tags are cheap and easy to attach, but they can fall off and might snag in fishing nets.

www.seaturtle.org

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