

EARTH IN DANGER

Habitat Destruction



by Helen Orme

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BEARPORT
PUBLISHING

New York, New York

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The Earth in Danger series is printed on recycled paper.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Orme, Helen.

Habitat destruction / by Helen Orme.

p. cm. — (Earth in danger)

Includes index.

ISBN-13: 978-1-59716-725-3 (library binding)

ISBN-10: 1-59716-725-8 (library binding)

1. Habitat (Ecology) — Juvenile literature. 2. Nature — Effect of human beings on — Juvenile literature. 3. Habitat conservation — Juvenile literature. 4. Conservation of natural resources — Juvenile literature. I. Title.

QH541.14.076 2009

577.27—dc22

2008022224

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2 Orchard Business Centre, North Farm Road,
Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN2 3XF, UK

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For more information, write to Bearport Publishing Company, Inc., 101 Fifth Avenue,
Suite 6R, New York, New York 10003. Printed in the United States of America.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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What Is a Habitat?

A habitat is a place in nature where living things make their home. Forests, mountains, deserts, grasslands, and oceans are habitats for plants and animals. All living things get food, water, and everything else they need to survive from these places.

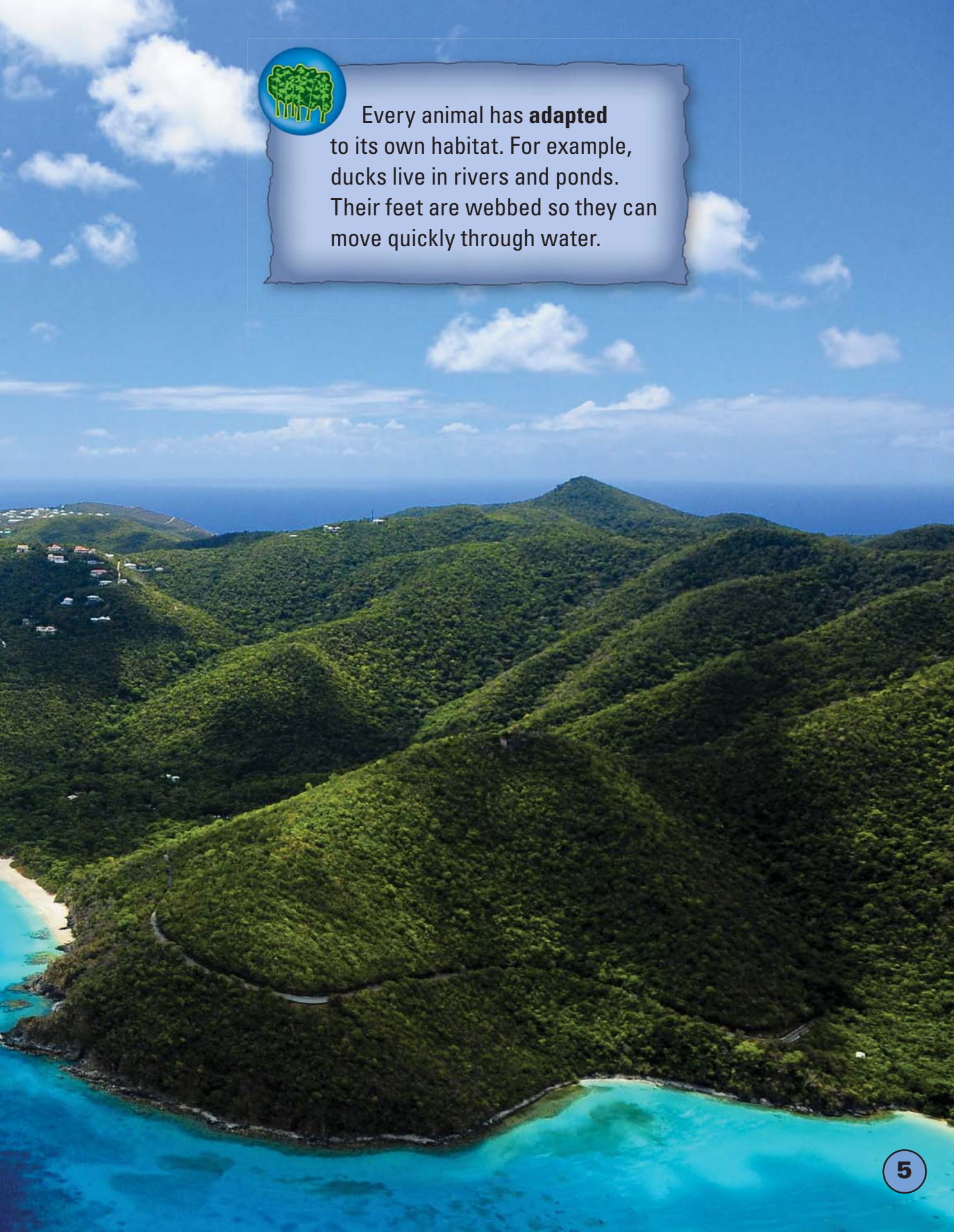
Different kinds of plants and animals need different kinds of habitats. For example, a polar bear needs to live in a cold, icy place. It couldn't survive in a hot, dry desert. If its habitat is damaged or destroyed, the bear can't just move somewhere else. It may die out and become **extinct**.

*A polar bear's
icy home*





Every animal has **adapted** to its own habitat. For example, ducks live in rivers and ponds. Their feet are webbed so they can move quickly through water.



Habitats in Danger

Who could destroy a habitat? The answer is people.

People damage habitats to get the **natural resources** they need from Earth. They clear land to plant **crops** for food, cut down forests to get wood for building homes, and dig into the ground to get oil and coal for **fuel**.

Long ago, there were fewer people on the planet than there are now. People could get what they needed from Earth without destroying many habitats. Today, the world's **population** is growing very quickly and lots of resources are needed. This means that more habitats are being destroyed. There are now fewer and fewer places where wildlife can survive.



The planet's population is increasing very quickly. In 1950, there were 2.5 billion people in the world. By 2050, there will be more than 9 billion people.



A new home being built



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Read More

Burnie, David, and Tony Juniper. *Endangered Planet*. Boston: Kingfisher (2004).

Harlow, Rosie, and Sally Morgan. *Nature in Danger*. New York: Kingfisher (2001).

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Habitat Destruction

People often damage Earth's animal and plant habitats to get the resources they need to survive. They clear land to plant crops, cut down forests to get wood, and dig into the ground for oil and coal. As the world's population grows, more and more of these habitats are destroyed because more resources are needed. Increasingly, there are fewer places where wildlife can survive. How can people get what they need without damaging the land? Look inside to find the answer and learn how everyone can help protect the planet.

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BEARPORT
PUBLISHING

www.bearportpublishing.com

ISBN-10: 1-59716-725-8
ISBN-13: 978-1-59716-725-3



9 781597 167253