

The 8th Edition of the UN Environment Programme flagship report, the UNEP Year Book 2011, examines global emerging issues and provides the latest environmental science. It also highlights major environmental events and developments over the past year, and presents the most recent data and indicator trends. The ocean has become a global repository for much of the waste we produce. Scientists are concerned that plastic debris in the ocean can transport toxic substances which may end up in the food chain, causing potential harm to ecosystems and human health. The Year Book also explores the wider implications of the use of phosphorus in food production. Phosphorus is an essential nutrient whose supply is limited. Since demand for fertilizer in agriculture rocketed in the 20th century, large amounts of phosphorus are flowing into the environment. New perspectives are also emerging on how biodiversity conservation can be integrated in forest management. Forests are receiving increasing attention, not least because of their role in climate change mitigation. Halting loss of forest biodiversity is essential if forests are to adapt to mounting pressures, including climate change and pest outbreaks. (...)

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