

GENTLE.NEWS

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"I cannot teach anybody anything. I can only make them think"

— Socrates

Scientists Work Hard to Protect America's Toads and Frogs

Did you know that tiny toads live high up in the Rocky Mountains? Some live as high as 12,000 feet above sea level. These little creatures are called boreal toads. They are tough animals that survive cold weather and harsh conditions.

Scientists from across the country are working to protect these special toads and other amphibians like frogs and newts. They study what the animals need to stay healthy and where they like to live. This important work helps make sure these creatures are around for future generations to enjoy.

One big challenge for the mountain toads is a tiny fungus that can harm them. Scientists are learning more about it each year. They are finding smart ways to help the toads stay safe and healthy in the wild.

Researchers also built a helpful computer tool this year. Park managers can use it to find the best places to protect toads. It shows which areas will stay good homes for the animals over time. This gives wildlife helpers a real advantage.

Thanks to this dedicated science work, there is real hope for frogs, toads, and newts all across America. Many caring people are watching over these creatures every day. It is wonderful to know that nature has such devoted friends looking out for it.

Backyard Hobbyists Now Help NASA Reach the Moon

Three NASA workers share something special. As boys, they built and flew toy aircraft at home. Derek, Justin H., and Justin L. spent hours in garages testing their creations. That childhood love of flying never left them.

Today, all three work at NASA's Armstrong Flight Research Center in California. Derek is the chief engineer. Justin H. is the chief pilot. Justin L. flies drones. Together, they help NASA prepare for future missions to the Moon and Mars.

Their team flies small, remotely controlled aircraft to test big ideas. These little planes let engineers try out new technology safely. Testing small is cheaper and easier than testing full-size aircraft. A good idea can be checked quickly and at low cost.

One key project tests a smart landing system called SPLICE. This system helps spacecraft land in exactly the right spot. It can also spot danger on the ground and steer away. Precise, safe landings will be vital on the Moon and Mars.

Their story shows that hobbies can lead to wonderful careers. A child flying a toy plane in the backyard may be dreaming bigger than anyone knows. At NASA, passion and curiosity are just as important as training. Everyday joy can truly launch something extraordinary.

Old Dam Removed, Fish Swim Free Again

A lovely stretch of river in Maryland just got a big improvement — thanks to some dedicated wildlife helpers and a Girl Scout camp.

Camp Conowingo sits along the Susquehanna River. It covers 600 acres of forests and open fields. Girl Scouts have long enjoyed this beautiful place. The camp is also home to a grand old historic house.

Nearby, a small old dam had been slowly falling apart for many years. The dam blocked a creek and stopped fish from swimming where they needed to go. Fish need to move freely to find food and have young.

A team of wildlife experts came together to help. They carefully removed the old dam from the creek. The work was finished in 2026 after years of effort. Funding came from a program supporting the famous Chesapeake Bay area.

Now the creek flows naturally again. Fish can swim upstream and downstream without anything blocking their way. This is called restoring fish passage. It is wonderful news for wildlife in the whole area. It is amazing what can happen when people work together for nature. A forgotten old dam is gone. A healthy creek has returned. And fish are swimming freely once more — just as nature intended.

Drones Help Save Underwater Grass Meadows in Maine

Under the ocean along Maine's coast, something special grows. It is called eelgrass. This underwater plant looks like long, green ribbons swaying in the water. It is home to many fish and small creatures.

Eelgrass meadows do a lot of good things. They clean the water. They protect the shoreline from storms. They give baby fish a safe place to grow. Scientists want to protect these meadows for future generations.

This summer, a team of scientists got to work in Casco Bay, Maine. They used drones to take pictures from the sky. The pictures showed where eelgrass was healthy and where it needed help. This was a clever new way to study the underwater plants.

The drone pilot, Bonnie Turek, flew over seven eelgrass beds. Some beds were doing well. Others needed care. One bed had almost disappeared but was starting to grow back. That was wonderful news for the team.

The pictures helped scientists make a smart plan. They can now focus on the areas where eelgrass has the best chance to recover. By using drones and careful science, the team is giving these beautiful underwater meadows a brighter future.

Two Baby Whales Bring Hope to Hawaiian Waters

Great news is coming from the warm waters around Hawaii! Scientists have spotted two rare baby whales swimming strong and healthy near the islands.

These babies belong to a very special group of whales called false killer whales. Only about 140 of them live near Hawaii. That makes every new baby very important and very exciting.

Researchers first saw the tiny newborns near Maui in February. Then in August, boat crews spotted the same two calves again. Seeing them healthy at eight months old made scientists very happy. The first six months of life are the hardest for baby whales.

These babies are extra special for another reason. Only ten newborn calves have been seen in this group since 1999. Mother whales only give birth once every seven to nine years. So two babies in one year is truly wonderful news. Scientists are calling it a remarkable gift.

False killer whales are loving, social animals. They stay close together their whole lives, like a big family. These two new calves are part of the same close family group. With care and protection, we hope to see this family grow bigger in the years ahead.

Activity Time - Word Search

Find the words below in the puzzle. Words go across or down only.

Words to Find:

HAWAII

OCEAN

PILOT

FISH

NEWT

NASA

TOAD

