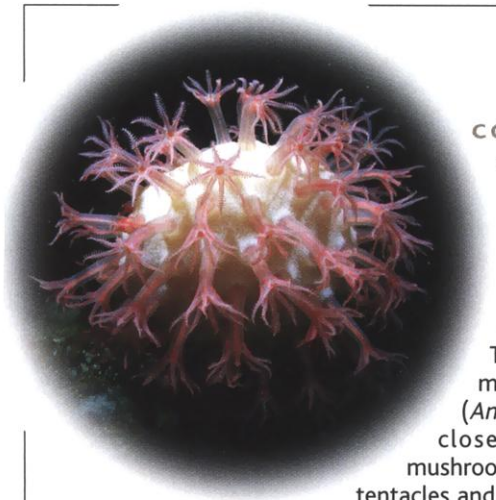
NETWATCH
edited by JOCELYN KAISER



COOL IMAGES

100-Some Creatures Under the Sea

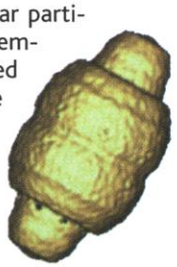
This deep sea–dwelling mushroom soft coral (*Anthomastus ritteri*) can close up to look like a mushroom, or unravel its frilly tentacles and wield stinging cells to catch zooplankton passing by. That's one of the tidbits to be gleaned from the Living Species List, a pop-up gallery with great photos of over 100 ocean inhabitants—from strands of bull kelp to glowing blue jellyfish, a giant octopus, and humpback whales. The pics are part of the E-Quarium at Monterey Bay Aquarium,* a wildly popular site packed with information about California marine life and habitats. Features such as a Web cam trained on the aquarium's penguins and a video clip of an octopus skittering across the sea floor come about as close as an Internet tour can to actually being there.

* www.mbayaq.org/efc/efc_hp/hp_kelp.asp

HOT PICKS

Probing the Hall effect. In 1879, physicist Edwin Hall discovered how a magnetic field alters the behavior of charge carriers in a metal strip. Today, the Hall effect is a well-known tool for characterizing semiconductors. This new site explains the technique and provides a forum for interested scientists to exchange ideas. www.eeel.nist.gov/812/hall.html

Cell biology mystery. So-called vaults are cellular particles discovered in 1986 and named for their resemblance to the arches of vaulted ceilings. Composed of protein and ribosomal RNA, the grenadelike bits exist in all cells of higher organisms, but their function is unknown. For an introduction, aimed at both students and scientists, to this funny-looking but presumably important structure, check out vaults.arc.ucla.edu



Quackery display. The Web site of the Museum of Questionable Medical Devices features a choice selection of "amazingly useless gadgets," from phrenology devices to radioactive quack cures to the Battle Creek Vibratory Chair. www.mtn.org/quack/index.htm

NET NEWS

Uncited But Not Forgotten

Just because your papers no longer rack up citations doesn't mean people aren't reading them—at least for some sciences. That's one implication of a look at access data by JSTOR, an online archive of 117 journals mainly in the arts and social sciences (www.jstor.org). The informal review of views back to 1997 found that citations don't always correspond to usage. For example, the fourth most accessed paper in economics—a 1973 article in the *Journal of Political Economy*—was cited only four times between '97 and '99 (and 14 times since 1974), compared to scores of citations for other, less read papers. That suggests that some papers that aren't pushing a discipline forward may nevertheless be very valuable for teaching, writes JSTOR's Kevin Guthrie in a recent conference paper. He concludes that "citations do not provide anything like a complete picture of the potential usefulness of a journal article."

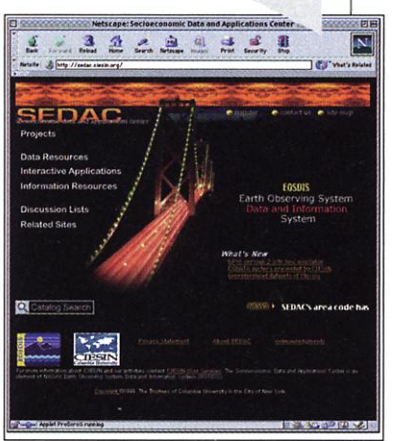
Other old papers are also being widely read, especially in math, where the most viewed papers are on average 32 years old. That's no surprise to mathematicians, who note that theories don't go out of style, say JSTOR staffers. But they say the results might turn out differently for "hard" sciences, where fields move more quickly.

SITE VISIT

Down-to-Earth Data

Since Landsat began beaming down shots of forests, mountains, and fields 3 decades ago, scientists have struggled to cross disciplines and link the reams of satellite data to solving on-the-ground problems. One result is the NASA-funded Socioeconomic Data and Applications Center (SEDAC) at Columbia University. Here you'll find a wealth of population data ready to match up with earth science data sets, as well as other environmental science info.

sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu



One of the site's premier offerings is its newly updated Gridded Population of the World. You can download 1990 and 1995 demographic data stripped of administrative borders and diced up into a remarkably fine 2.5-minute-by-2.5-minute (about 4.6-kilometer-by-4.6-km) grid. Maps show, for instance, how empty North America is compared to densely populated northern India. SEDAC also serves up more detailed geospatial and census data for China and Mexico—two countries closely eyed for ties between population and environment—as well as U.S. census data. In the Information Gateway section, plug in, say, "water pollution" and pull up report abstracts from dozens of databases, from U.S. state agencies to Costa Rican biology maps to MEDLINE. A database of 140 environmental treaties can tell you which countries have signed which agreements. Tune in to a page on the ozone layer to see world maps of near-real-time data on ultraviolet light penetration. Looks like you really need that sunblock in the Andes.

Science ONLINE

Along with our coverage of the AIDS meeting in Durban, South Africa (see p. 368), we draw your attention to an online photo gallery that's part of *Science*'s recent special news package on AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. Photographer Malcolm Linton's portraits of researchers and Africans touched by HIV are accompanied by reporter Jon Cohen's captions telling the story behind the picture.
www.sciencemag.org/feature/data/aids_africa/gallery.shl

Send Internet news and great Web site suggestions to netwatch@aaas.org