



Need a high-resolution model of melatonin or TNT for a lecture or publication? At this site* you can generate a nifty ball-and-stick model that looks so realistic, it even shows light glinting off the plastic spheres. (Above, vitamin B-12.)

The tool, which makes the models on a supercomputer (actually, a cluster of PCs), is the latest addition at the Indiana University Molecular Structure Center. Chemists and materials scientists visit the site to download x-ray crystallographic data on the structure of organic and inorganic molecules, such as superconductors. But the site is also a big hit among students and the public drawn to a section called Common Molecule Pages. There you'll find 3D models of various types for nearly 300 molecules, from lysine (an amino acid) to strychnine (rat poison) to buckyballs.

www.iumsc.indiana.edu/index.html



FIELD TRIP

In the Seabird Seat

Its neon bill may bring to mind a tropical toucan, but this horned puffin (with chick) actually breeds in chilly Alaska. A good source of info about this and other seafaring birds is this site* from U.S. Geological Survey biologists in Alaska. Aimed at both students and scientists, the site explains Alaskan ecosystems through descriptions of research on how the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill and long-term swings in forage fish populations have affected seabirds. But birds are the site's stars: Photos and captions written by scientists profile species in Alaska and elsewhere, such as pigeon guillemots, which catch fish by flying underwater, and black-footed albatrosses, which migrate to Alaska from nesting grounds in Hawaii on wings that span nearly 2 meters.

* www.absc.usgs.gov/research/seabird&foragefish/index.html

NETWATCH

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PERSONAL PAGES

Earth and Sky

It's an unusual Web site that packs tarantulas, astronomy, paleoclimate, and coral reefs onto the same server. But all those and more interest Hays Cummins, a biological oceanographer in the department of—what else, interdisciplinary studies—at Miami University in Ohio. The result is a great trove of links, especially for teaching.

The site's title is an apt description: "Tropical Ecosystems: Coral Reefs, Rainforests & A Potpourri of Weather, Earth Science & Other Good Things." Scroll past the course syllabi and photos of students on field trips to find links to pages on specific subjects. The section on climate change is especially nice, with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ice core data, primers on the carbon cycle, a pollen atlas, and El Niño links. The links on weather—"just something I've always been obsessed with," Cummins says—feature movies of the latest tropical hurricanes. The earth sciences page includes sections on extinctions, paleontology (fossil databases), and volcanoes (see the 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens via satellite). And the tarantulas? That page of links began when Cummins's lab acquired two living specimens.

jrscience.wcp.muohio.edu/html/index.html

GUIDES

Wanderlust Cure

Itching to spend some time doing research in the land of beer, Bach, and BMWs? If you're contemplating such a sojourn—or have tickets in hand—then check out a new Web guide* for researchers sponsored by the German government. The site is essentially a brochure with links that describes fellowships offered by Germany's main science agency (the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) and other sources. It's also a good place for an overview of German research, which includes some 270 universities, the 78 Max Planck institutes and labs, and various other research centers. You can link to directories, search for university courses, or find travel info from the site, which comes in English, German, Spanish, and French versions. Sprinkled throughout are quotes from visiting scientists who rave about things like Germany's libraries and its respect for women academics.

* www.research-in-germany.de

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Science ONLINE

If NetWatch doesn't quench your thirst for good Web sites, then pay a visit to the Enhanced Perspectives archive. Each week, Science Online selects one Perspective and packs it with links to tutorials, lab pages, databases, and more. These online articles serve as valuable primers and Web guides to the latest research. To browse the archive by topics ranging from astrochemistry to cell biology to seismology, go to

www.sciencemag.org/misc/e-perspectives.shtml

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