



## ***Air, Animals and Plants*** ***Monterey, California – May 10, 2024***

Today is the fifth and final day of Air Quality Awareness Week. Air pollution impacts animals and plants through a variety of pathways - directly through the air and indirectly through the water and soil. Air Quality Awareness Week is a great time to learn how air pollution impacts our ecosystems and the work that is being done to protect air quality and our ecosystems.

### **Air, Animals and Plants Basics**

#### **What is an ecosystem?**

An ecosystem is a community of plants, animals and other organisms, along with their environment, including the air, water and soil. Air pollutants can cause many environment effects to ecosystems. Everything in an ecosystem is connected. If something harms one part of an ecosystem - one species of plant or animal, the soil or the water - it can have an impact on everything else.

### **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Work on Air, Animals and Plants**

#### **Air Trends Report**

For more than 50 years, EPA has maintained its commitment to protecting public health by reducing pollutant emissions and improving air quality. The annual Air Trends Report, titled Our Nation's Air, summarizes the nation's air quality status and trends through 2022.

#### **Health and Environmental Effects of Hazardous Air Pollutants**

In addition to exposure from breathing air toxics, some toxic air pollutants such as mercury, can deposit onto soils or surface waters, where they are taken up by plants and ingested by animals and are eventually magnified up through the food chain. Like humans, animals may experience health problems if exposed to sufficient quantities of air toxics over time. [Learn more about health and environmental effects of hazardous air pollutants.](#)

#### **Ecosystems and Air Quality Research**

EPA researchers are exploring the dynamic interrelationships between natural ecosystems and air quality — advancing our understanding of how air pollution can negatively impact forests, lakes, and other natural ecosystems and the benefits they provide. Learn more at EPA's [Ecosystems Research](#) website.

For local information, please visit: <https://www.mbard.org/air-quality-and-planning>. Photo attached.

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