

# Environment and conservation

You probably already know a lot of words for talking about the environment, pollution, and so on. In this unit we look at words that are often used together (collocations). Try to learn some of these expressions and use them in your writing.

## A

### Threats and potential threats to the environment

**Shrinking habitats**<sup>1</sup> are a threat to both plants and animals, and **endangered species**<sup>2</sup> need legal protection if they are to survive. Meanwhile, **global warming**<sup>3</sup> will produce rising sea levels and **climatic changes**<sup>4</sup>, and **carbon dioxide emissions**<sup>5</sup> from the burning of fossil fuels<sup>6</sup> are contributing to the **greenhouse effect**<sup>7</sup>. In addition, population growth exerts **severe pressure on**<sup>8</sup> **finite resources**<sup>9</sup>, and the **ecological balance**<sup>10</sup> may be upset by **uncontrolled deforestation**<sup>11</sup>. **Demographic projections**<sup>12</sup> suggest the world population will grow before it begins to stabilise. One of the **worst case scenarios**<sup>13</sup> is that there will be no tropical forests left by the year 2050. Our only hope is that **pristine environments**<sup>14</sup> such as Antarctica can be protected from development and damage.

- <sup>1</sup> places where animals live and breed which are decreasing in size
- <sup>2</sup> types of animals/plants which are in danger of no longer existing
- <sup>3</sup> steady rise in average world temperatures
- <sup>4</sup> changes in the weather/climate
- <sup>5</sup> carbon dioxide gas from factories, cars, etc.
- <sup>6</sup> coal, oil, etc.
- <sup>7</sup> warming of the Earth's surface caused by pollution
- <sup>8</sup> formal: puts pressure on
- <sup>9</sup> limited resources
- <sup>10</sup> balance of natural relationships in the environment
- <sup>11</sup> destruction/clearing of forests
- <sup>12</sup> forecasts about the population
- <sup>13</sup> the worst possibilities for the future
- <sup>14</sup> perfectly clean/untouched/unspoilt areas

## B

### Responses to environmental issues and problems

Look at these newspaper headlines and note the useful phrases.

**GOVERNING PARTY  
IN BID TO IMPROVE  
GREEN CREDENTIALS\***

\* reputation for positive support of the environment

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT\*  
THE ONLY ANSWER FOR EMERGING  
COUNTRIES, SAYS UN COMMISSION**

\* development of industry, etc. which does not threaten the environment or social and economic stability

**PROPHETS OF DOOM AND GLOOM\*  
SHOULD LISTEN TO SCIENTIFIC  
EVIDENCE, SAYS PRIME MINISTER**

\* people who always make the most depressing or pessimistic forecasts for the future

**PIECEMEAL CONSERVATION\*  
INEFFECTIVE – NATIONAL POLICY  
NEEDED, SAYS NEW REPORT**

\* carrying out conservation one bit at a time, with no overall plan

# Exercises

**38.1** Make these sentences formal by using words and phrases from A opposite instead of the underlined words. Make any other necessary changes to produce a correct sentence.

- 1 All that carbon-what's-it-called gas put out by cars and factories is a major problem.
- 2 These flowers here are a type there's not many left of, so it's illegal to pick them.
- 3 A lot of wild animals have to survive in smaller and smaller areas where they can live.
- 4 Most of Patagonia is a completely spotless area that's never been touched.
- 5 We have to look after the things we use on this planet because they won't last forever.
- 6 If the cutting down of trees continues, there will be no forest left ten years from now.
- 7 Burning coal and oil and stuff like that causes a lot of pollution.
- 8 The sea will get higher if this heating up of the world continues.
- 9 Increasing population puts really big pressure on economic resources.
- 10 The way things all balance one another in nature is very delicate.

**38.2** Complete the following table, using a dictionary if necessary. Do not fill the shaded boxes.



noun	verb	adjective	adverb
climate			
demography			
	project		
	sustain		

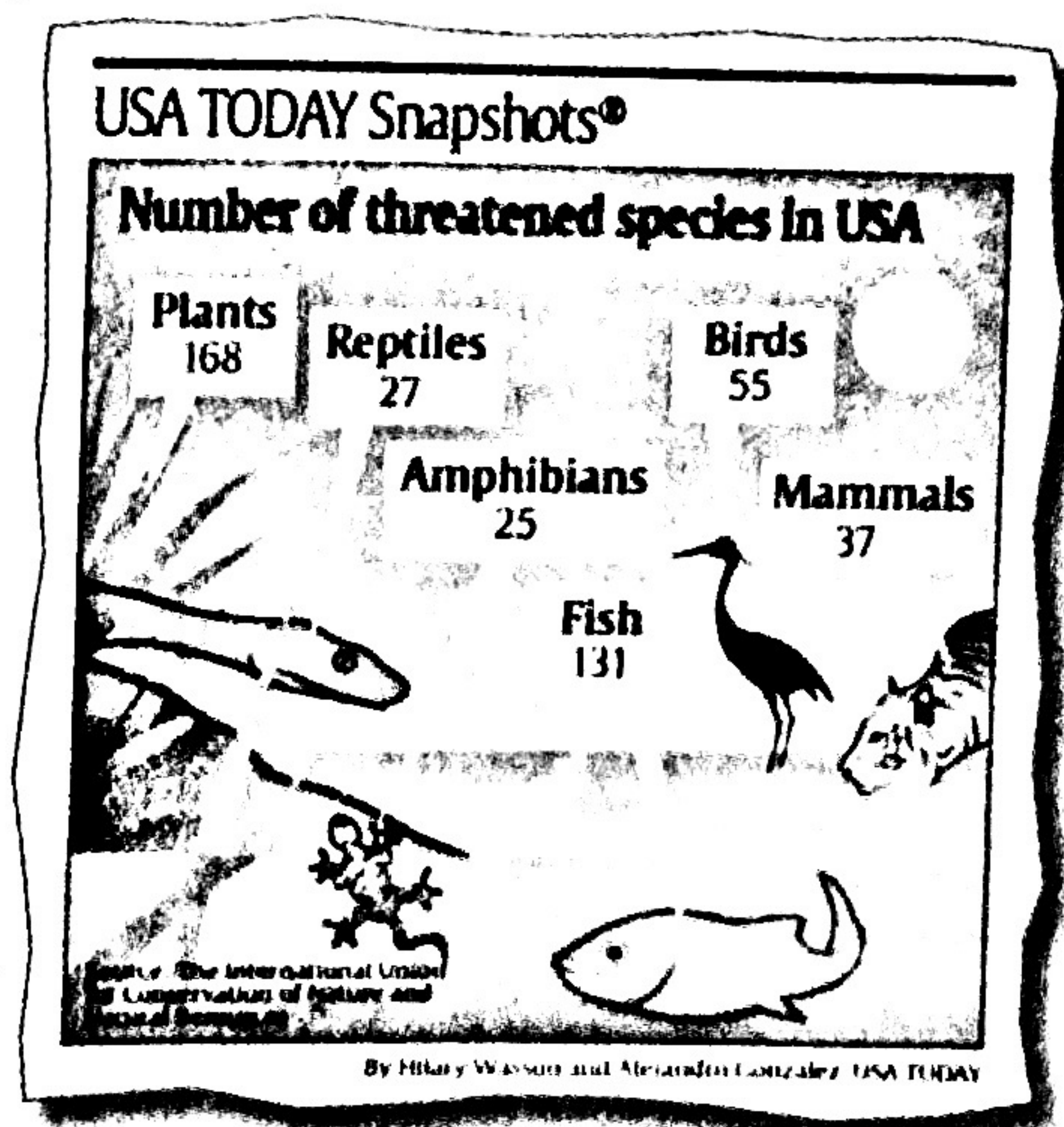
**38.3** Correct the mistakes in this paragraph.

Profits of boom and gloom are always saying that we are heading for an environmental catastrophe, and that unless we adopt a policy of attainable development we will cause irreparable damage to the planet. The worst place scenery is of a world choked by overpopulation, the greenhouse affect and traffic gridlock. Much of what is claimed is exaggerated, but politicians are influenced by such voices and are always trying to improve their green potentials in the eyes of the voters.

**38.4** An American newspaper recently published these statistics. Read them and answer the two questions below.



- 1 There is one word in the picture for a type of animal not mentioned on the opposite page. What does this new word mean? Use a dictionary if necessary.
- 2 Which phrase in this unit means the same as threatened species?



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**FOLLOW UP**

To get more vocabulary connected with environment and conservation issues visit the websites of major conservation organisations such as the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) at [www.worldwildlife.org](http://www.worldwildlife.org) or Friends of the Earth at [www.foei.org](http://www.foei.org)