

How are animals and plants adapting to our increasingly warming and polluted world?

Peppered moths living in industrial areas of Britain were getting darker, better for blending in against the soot-blackened buildings and avoiding predation from the air.

House sparrows—introduced to North America from Europe—were changing size and color according to the climate of their new homes.

Tufted hairgrass growing around electricity pylons was developing a tolerance for zinc (which is used as a coating for pylons and can be toxic to plants).

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“We had this impression that, well, actually, maybe this rapid evolution thing is not so exceptional,” says [biologist Andrew] Hendry, now a professor at McGill University in Montreal.

With a colleague, Michael Kinnison (now at the University of Maine), Hendry pulled together a database of examples of rapid evolution and wrote a 1999 [paper](#) that kickstarted interest in the field.

Now, Hendry and colleagues have updated and expanded the original data set with [more than 5,000 additional examples](#): everything from the cranial depth of the common chaffinch to the lifespan of the Trinidadian guppy. Scientists are using this data to answer questions about how fast and far the natural world is changing and how much of the change is due to humans.

[**This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.**](#)