

# On Earth Day's 50th, 'Travel' at Home



By Gary Diedrichs April 22, 2020

There's a joke going around that Mother Earth, sick of how we've treated her, has told us to go to our rooms. Indeed, it's no little irony that many of us will spend this Earth Day, April 22, stuck inside, distancing and sheltering. And outside, nature seems pretty happy about it—the canals of Venice are running clear, the bears are roaming free in Yosemite National Park and pollution and greenhouse gas emissions have fallen across continents.

[Earth Day](#) began in 1970, which makes this its half-century anniversary. As it says on the Earth Day website, "On April 22, 1970, 20 million Americans—10 percent of the U.S. population at the time—took to the street, college campuses and hundreds of cities to protest environmental ignorance and demand a new way forward for our planet. The first Earth Day is credited with launching the modern environmental movement."

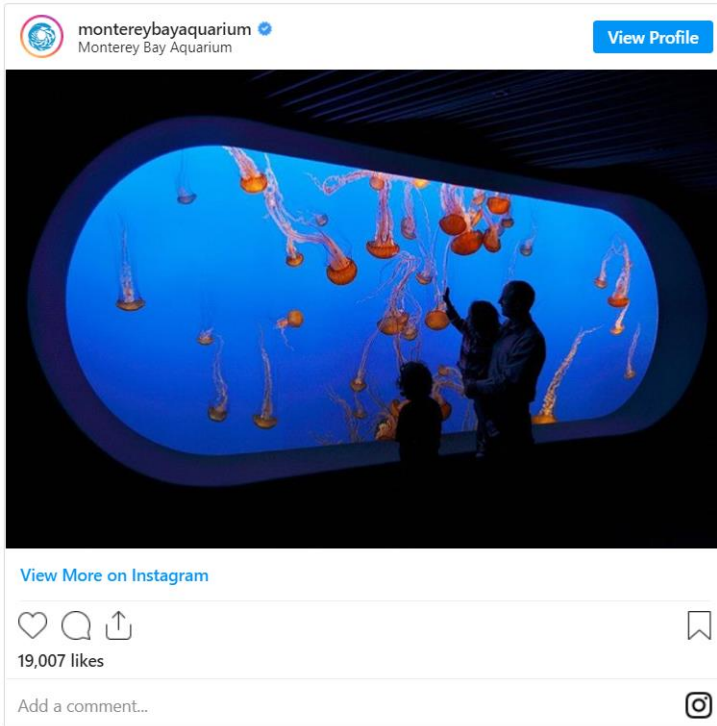
**See also:** [Live Events Beyond COVID-19: Sustainability Matters](#)

We've made progress since then, but many in the scientific and environmental communities think not nearly enough. Climate change is still a ticking time bomb. At the same time, most sustainability experts agree that the hospitality and meetings industries deserve credit for being in the forefront [by instituting green practices](#) since the early 2000s, embracing LEED and other green-building certifications, energy-saving HVAC, solar power, compact fluorescent (and then LED) lighting and, more recently, [single-use plastic](#), excess food donation, reusable and recyclable trade-show exhibits, and zero-waste meetings. And more.

So, how best to mark this Earth Day?

## Celebrating at Home

Absence makes the heart grow fonder, the saying goes. In these stay-at-home times, we miss the joys of nature. With the stress of the pandemic and the severe economic disruption it has wrought, then, what could be a more fulfilling way to celebrate Earth Day than a) resolving anew to advocate for meaningful measures to stem climate change; and b) enjoying the wonders of the natural world—virtually?



Many options for taking in nature virtually are available—from the [live jelly cam](#) at Monterey Bay Aquarium in California to [going island-hopping](#) on Google Earth to some of Hawaii’s most breathtaking spots—but here’s one of the most exotic: a series of virtual adventures in the South Pacific, on the 300-island archipelago that is Fiji.

**Get sea turtle ecology-certified:** World-class dive resort, Volivoli Beach Resort, is offering a [digital Sea Turtle Ecology course](#) that you can take from the comfort of home. Designed for any age, participants learn how to identify different types of turtles, how far they date back (some over 100 million years), their breeding, swimming and migrating patterns, environmental threats and current conservation measures.

**Adopt a manta:** To celebrate Earth Month, Kokomo Private Island’s Adopt-a-Manta program lets you “adopt” a manta ray through the [Manta Trust](#)—an initiative that protects manta rays in the waters surrounding the private-island resort. Manta parents will receive regular updates on their manta’s progress, where they have been sighted, and any exciting news from the resort’s ongoing research. Led by the island’s resident marine biologists, Kokomo’s Manta Conservation Project aims to monitor, protect, and conserve manta rays in the waters of Fiji.

**Tune into Turtle Talks:** Turtle Island Resort is noted for operating sustainably, and, perhaps unsurprisingly, for turtle conservation. In addition to a program in partnership with World Wildlife Fund in which turtles are tagged and released, the resort has created “[Turtle Talks](#)”—a series of “global conversations to accelerate positive change in the world.” The inaugural series of 12 episodes imagines a clean-energy future, a world in which our power is harvested from renewable sources of energy, and pollution and its health effects are eliminated as humans live more in balance with the planet. A binge-worthy endeavor!

**Adopt a shark:** Shark enthusiasts, take note (and if you aren’t one, learn why you should be). Adopt a Fiji shark with a name, personality and tracking history. Beqa Adventure Divers created this [‘My Fiji Shark’](#) conservation initiative with support from the United Nations Development Program to raise funds to support conservation efforts and ongoing research. The sharks up for adoption are regular visitors to Fiji Shark Reef Marine Reserve, where there are over 200 individually named sharks.

**Become a Junior Marine Biologist:** As part of the [‘At Home with Six Senses’](#) initiative, Six Senses Fiji is offering virtual tutorials and lessons on life hacks for living more sustainably which are inspired by the brand’s on-site Earth Labs. The first program launched is a [Junior Marine Biology Course](#) led by Six Senses Laamu’s team of on-property marine biologists. The interactive course includes at-home worksheets, assignments, coloring projects and more.

*Gary Diedrichs, senior content producer at Smart Meetings, writes frequently on sustainability topics. He covered the first Earth Day for a New Jersey radio station.*

Link: <https://www.smartmeetings.com/EarthDayTravelAtHome>