

## **Earth Day by Rebecca Lexa**

Sunday, April 22 is the 48th annual Earth Day! This international event was started in 1970 as a way to raise awareness for environmental and conservation issues and efforts. It was first proposed in response to a massive oil spill off the coast of Santa Barbara, California, which killed over ten thousand wild animals and polluted the shoreline. Organizers wanted people to be aware that this disaster was just one of many harming nature worldwide, and to motivate people to work together to make the world a better, cleaner place.

At first Earth Day was celebrated every ten years. Then in 1990, efforts were made to turn it into an annual event. Since then, millions of people worldwide have gathered every year to discuss ecological threats and promote solutions, and to celebrate the care we have for our one and only planet.

This year's Earth Day theme is "End Plastic Pollution." If you've ever been walking down the beach you've probably seen plastic bottles, food containers and other litter left by people or washed up by the waves. This plastic can be very harmful to wildlife large and small. You can help celebrate Earth Day on by picking up plastic litter and other trash during the official Long Beach beach cleanup starting at 9:30 on April 21, and by finding ways to reduce the amount of single-use, disposable plastic that you use in your everyday life. Don't forget to have some fun in your newly-cleaned habitat, by spending time hiking, birdwatching or even having a picnic with friends and family!