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Environmental history is a young subdiscipline in the humanities whose beginnings in Germany reach back to the 1980s. In the last decade, a wealth of detailed studies, conference proceedings, and new book series have made for a considerable increase in knowledge and a palpable differentiation within the field. This overview approaches this interdisciplinary and profitable field by focusing on modern and contemporary history and by distinguishing among three approaches to the history of human beings and their natural environment. The author presents achievements and perspectives from the core areas (1) forests and hunting, (2) urban habitat, and (3) recent tendencies, which can at best be grasped as cultural-historical accentuations of environmental history. All three fields are characterized above all by their great productivity. This is due in part to the fact that the studies are in line with the fundamental trends and methods of history and social science. Likewise the results presented in the article indicate how very recent debates about the condition of the environment can still be used as a starting point for developing environmental-historical inquiry and theses. (author's abstract)

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