

# A tale of three “green, good, safe cities”: Kingfisher’s global eco-tour

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## The Great “Green” Gated Community in Dubai

Kingfisher, renowned for his keen eye and quick wit, recently made headlines in [Wild Wise Weird](#) [1], and decided to take on a global tour to investigate the trendy and mysterious phenomenon of human “eco-living.” His first stop was Dubai, where he perched atop a solar panel in the famous “Sustainable City.”

“How peculiar,” he mused, watching residents dash around in electric golf carts. “The humans have built an oasis of sustainability in the desert, surrounded by courtyard villas, a world-class natural spa center, a horse-riding zone, and even an indoor ski park [2]. Yet their enclave with walls is so high that my friend Larky the Greater hoopoe-lark can’t even visit his ancestral nesting grounds!”

A passing hoopoe-lark called out, “They say it’s sustainable living with the happiest community [3], but I need a VIP pass just to fly over it! Last week, they shoed me away because I wasn’t an “eco-certified” bird!”

Kingfisher chuckled, “Oh yes, the famous human logic—always mixing up luxury with

ecology. I wonder what exactly “sustainable city” really sustains?”

### **Copenhagen—The “Good” City of Carbon-Free**

After his Dubai adventure, Kingfisher flew to Copenhagen, a coastal island of Zealand and Amager.

“People seem happy here,” he thought. Perching comfortably on a tree branch, he watched the locals swimming at the harbor next to the wind farm, dinners at eco-certified restaurants downtown, and riding on electric city bikes through the climate change adaptation zone [4,5], With a smile, he nodded “Perhaps this is what a sustainable city looks like!”

As he was about to take off, Kingfisher saw a group of pigeons packing their suitcases like they were going for a long trip.

“Why are you guys moving out? Life seems great here”—He curiously asked.

“Can’t afford the rent,” shaking his head, a pigeon sighed. “They are going to turn our houses into sustainable lofts to make a carbon-neutral city [6]. Now, every pigeon needs bank loans to live here!”

“But it sure will be better for the environment?”—Kingfisher pondered.

“Oh yes,” another pigeon replied sarcastically, “forcing working-class birds to commute 50 kilometers between workplace and affordable nests every day. Very carbon-neutral indeed!”



**Illustration:** Kingfisher’s global eco-tour (Source: <https://www.imagine.art>)

### **Paterson–The “Safest” Park in Johannesburg**

His final destination was Paterson Park—the Corridors of Freedom in Johannesburg. While unsure where to perch, he saw the strangest sight ever—a flock of native birds taking “security clearance” just to enter the park [5].

“Remember, birds,” a haughty peacock yelled, “to enter the eco-park, you must perform three loop flights: two loops passing through the security camera, one loop before the guard park, and absolutely NO natural bird calls!”

“This is ridiculous!” a frustrated cape starling grumbled, “I’ve lived here for generations, but now I need three forms of identification just to forage my food inside this woodland!”

Suddenly, a wealthy Goshawk showed up at the gate, pulling out a shiny golden card under his wing, and breezed through the security. “Welcome, VIP Eco-Member!” the guards chirped.

“Interesting,” Kingfisher muttered, “apparently being sustainable just means being shiny!”

### **Kingfisher’s Investigation Note:**

As Kingfisher came back to his bird village, he gathered all the villagers for his lesson learned.

“My bird friends, I’ve seen the human dreams and obsession with their so-called “sustainable cities”—whether it’s 10-meter tall walls in Dubai, impervious streets in Copenhagen, and guarded gates in Johannesburg [5]. They call it good, safe, and green, but they’ve missed one important lesson, that Mother Earth never checks anyone’s bank account before sharing her gifts” [7,8].

Then, Kingfisher said wisely, “Perhaps, humans need to realize that sustainability is like the sky—it belongs to everyone or no one at all. You can’t save half a planet while locking out the other half!”

\*Note: This fable was inspired by Vuong [1], Nguyen [8], and Schoulund et al. [5].

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