

Identifying land management approaches which deliver for both people and nature

Nicholas J. Balfour, Rachael Durrant, Adrian Ely, Christopher J. Sandom

Increasingly social scientists and ecologists have been working together to provide evidence to help make decisions about how to best manage the land for the benefit of both people and nature. Because human behaviour is central to many aspects of our current environmental problems and solutions, such collaborations are of vital importance. In this project we used an innovative approach to identify management strategies to help inform how ecosystems should be restored in areas of high ecological degradation and human density. The aim of our study was to better understand this problem, rather than to arrive explicitly at a solution. We were particularly interested in the contribution environmentally friendly farming and nature conservation sites could make to delivering the diverse needs of people and nature. Our approach was to combine structured interviews with stakeholders, ecological field data and management surveys. The interviews were designed to reveal the perceived needs and wants of people and nature from environmentally friendly farming and conservation landscapes. The ecological field data was used to examine how specific land management, particularly relating to their management of large herbivores (e.g. cows and deer), performs in delivering those needs. The management surveys were used to determine the management practices of each of our field sites. Overall, the findings of this study suggest that a combination of a variety of land management techniques is required to provide for the diverse needs of people and nature within shared landscapes. However, the data also indicate that agroecological farming may be a particularly effective multi-purpose land management option, as it provides low intensity agricultural goods, recreational spaces, and has the potential to provide habitats for a range of wildlife.



A longhorn cattle amongst the scrub at one of our study sites – Knepp Wildland. Photo: Christopher Sandom.

Plain language summary from article:
Balfour NJ, Durrant R, Ely A, Sandom CJ. People, Nature and large Herbivores in a shared landscape: A mixed-method study of the ecological and social outcomes from agriculture and conservation. *People Nat.* 2021;00:1–13.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/pan3.10182>