

How we should restore our planet, and why

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Our planet is under extreme human pressure. One way or another, the majority of non-iced land has been transformed by humanity, and those ecosystems left intact are, to a large extent, low productivity ones such as deserts, tundra or taiga. Many ecosystems have been used intensively by humans and the areas left are so fragmented that they cannot sustain themselves. Moreover, even anthropogenic ecosystems are in many areas used in such way that they gradually lose their ability to function. In other words, it is not enough to merely protect the current status of ecosystems; we must restore degraded ecosystems. Consequently, ecosystem restoration brings substantial benefits, not only to nature, but also to humans. In response to this, Aichi Biodiversity’s 15 targets as adopted in the Convention on Biological Diversity commit signatories to restore 15% of degraded ecosystems. Similarly, the UN declared the current decade (from 2021 to 2030) to be the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. To restore ecosystems efficiently, we must take into account the fact that nature has natural processes which may lead to ecosystem recovery, and we should consider them seriously in our restoration planning. At the same time, we must take into account the fact that human society is a key player affecting ecosystems today.