

A Manifesto for Rewilding the World

27th May 2013

Minor changes have been made to layout and headings for training purposes.

All references apart from first four have been removed for simplification.

The original article can be found [here](#).

A mass restoration of ecosystems offers us hope
where there was little hope before.

By George Monbiot, published in the Guardian 28th May 2013

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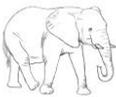
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The Past

Until modern humans arrived, every continent except Antarctica possessed a megafauna. In the Americas, alongside mastodons, mammoths, four-tusked and spiral-tusked elephants, there was a beaver the size of a black bear: eight feet from nose to tail ¹. There were giant bison weighing two tonnes, which carried horns seven feet across ².

The short-faced bear stood thirteen feet in its hind socks ³. One hypothesis maintains that its astonishing size and shocking armoury of teeth and claws are the hallmarks of a specialist scavenger: it specialised in driving giant lions and sabretooth cats off their prey ⁴. The Argentine roc (*Argentavis magnificens*) had a wingspan of 26 feet. Sabretooth salmon nine feet long migrated up Pacific coast rivers.

During the previous interglacial period, Britain and Europe contained much of the megafauna we now associate with the tropics:

Animal	Image	Until
Forest Elephants		40,000 years ago
Rhinos		
Hippos		
Lions		11,000 years ago
Hyenas		

Header: on each page

Style: Title

Right aligned

Centred and paragraph break between lines (extra spacing). Also hyperlink

Centred and line break between lines (no extra spacing)

Bold and italics

Table of contents (auto generated with page numbers)

Style: Heading 1

End notes (References)

Table with Border colour and width changed, images inserted, merged cells (in last row) and vertically centred text

Footer – with page numbers

Word training – things you can do

The elephants, rhinos and hippos were driven into southern Europe by the ice, then exterminated around 40,000 years ago when modern humans arrived. Lions and hyaenas persisted: lions hunted reindeer across the frozen wastes of Britain until 11,000 years ago. The distribution of these animals has little to do with temperature: only where they co-evolved with humans and learnt to fear them did they survive.

Evidence of the past

Most of the deciduous trees in Europe can resprout wherever the trunk is broken. They can survive the extreme punishment – hacking, splitting, trampling – inflicted when a hedge is laid. Understorey trees such as holly, box and yew have much tougher roots and branches than canopy trees, despite carrying less weight. Our trees, in other words, bear strong signs of adaptation to elephants. Blackthorn, which possesses very long spines, seems over-engineered to deter browsing by deer; but not, perhaps, rhinoceros.

All this has been forgotten, even by professional ecologists. Read any paper on elephants and trees in East Africa, and it will tell you that many species have adapted to “hedge” in response to elephant-attack. Yet, during a three-day literature search in the Bodleian library, all I could find on elephant adaptation in Europe was a throwaway sentence in one scientific paper.

The elephant in the forest is the elephant in the room: the huge and obvious fact that everyone has overlooked.



“Conservation”

Since then much of Europe – especially Britain – has lost most of its mesofauna as well: bison, moose, boar, wolf, bear, lynx, wolverine, even, in most parts, wildcat, beavers and capercaillie. These losses, paradoxically, have often been locked in by conservation policy.

Conservation sites must be maintained in what is called **“favourable condition”**: which means the condition in which they were found when they were designated. More often than not this is a state of extreme depletion: the merest scraping of what was once a vibrant and dynamic ecosystem. The ecological disasters we call nature reserves are often kept in this depleted state through intense intervention: cutting and burning any trees that return; grazing by domestic animals at greater densities and for longer periods than would ever be found in nature.

The conservation ethos is neatly summarised in the forester Ritchie Tassell’s sarcastic question: “how did nature cope before we came along?”.

Style: Heading 2

Paragraph spacing
Adds extra space after every paragraph

Image: set to text wrap

Text Highlight colour

Paragraph indented

Page break – rest of text starts on next page

Rewilding

Through rewilding – the mass restoration of ecosystems – I see an opportunity to reverse the destruction of the natural world. Researching my book *Feral*, I came across rewilding programmes in several parts of Europe, including some (such as [Trees for Life in Scotland](#) and [the Wales Wild Land Foundation](#)) in the UK, which are beginning to show how swiftly nature responds when we stop trying to control it. Rewilding, in my view, should involve

Font Colour

- reintroducing missing animals and plants
- taking down the fences
- blocking the drainage ditches
- culling a few particularly invasive exotic species
- but otherwise standing back.

List: bullets

What's it about It's about abandoning the Biblical doctrine of dominion which has governed our relationship with the natural world.

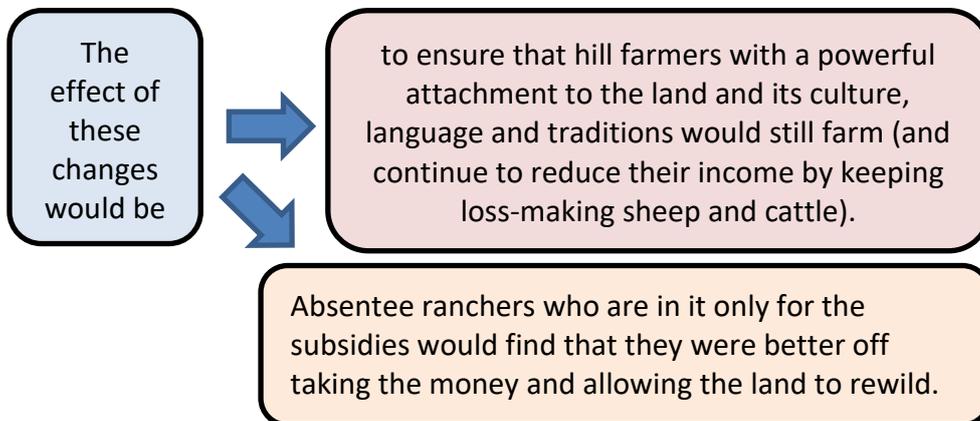
Indents: first line and subsequent lines different (could also use table with hidden lines)

Public money The only thing preventing a faster rewilding in the European Union is public money. Farming is sustained on infertile land (by and large, the uplands) through the taxpayer's munificence. Without our help, almost all hill-farming would cease immediately. I'm not calling for that, but I do think it's time the farm subsidy system stopped forcing farmers to destroy wildlife.

At the moment, to claim their single farm payments, farmers must prevent "the encroachment of unwanted vegetation on agricultural land". They don't have to produce anything: they merely have to keep the land in "agricultural condition", which means bare. I propose two changes to the subsidy regime.

1. The first is to cap the amount of land for which farmers can claim money at 100 hectares (250 acres)
 - a. It's outrageous that the biggest farmers harvest millions every year from much poorer taxpayers, by dint of possessing so much land.
 - b. A cap would give small farmers an advantage over large.
2. The second is to remove the agricultural condition rule.

List: Multi-level numbering



Shapes with text inside

Word training – things you can do

Despite the best efforts of governments, farmers and conservationists, nature is already beginning to return.

One estimate suggests that two thirds of the previously-forested parts of the US have reforested, as farming and logging have retreated, especially from the eastern half of the country.

Another proposes that by 2030 farmers on the European Continent (though not in Britain, where no major shift is expected) will vacate around 30 million hectares (75 million acres), roughly the size of Poland.

Columns (different widths and with vertical line between)

While the mesofauna is already beginning to spread back across Europe, land areas of this size could perhaps permit the reintroduction of some of our lost megafauna. Why should Europe not have a Serengeti or two?

Line spacing 1.5 lines affects every line

Horizontal line

	centred	right-aligned
1	Elephant	40,000 years ago
2	Rhinos	40,000 years ago
3	Hippos	40,000 years ago
4	Lions	11,000 years ago
5	Hyenas	unknown

Tabs (similar affect to tables with hidden lines)

Above all, rewilding offers a positive environmentalism. Environmentalists have long known what they are against; now we can explain what we are for. It introduces hope where hope seemed absent. It offers us a chance to replace our silent spring with a raucous summer.

Paragraph shading

George Monbiot is a British writer, known for his environmental and political activism.

George Monbiot's book [Feral: searching for enchantment on the frontiers of rewilding](#) is published by Allen Lane.

Text box – floating with wrapped text

References:

End notes (References)

¹ *Castoroides ohioensis*.

² *Bison latifrons*.

³ *Arctodus simus*.

⁴ Nancy Sisinyak, no date given. The Biggest Bear ... Ever. Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=wildlifeneews.view_article&articles_id=232&issue_id=41