



Conservation Letters

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Mini Reviews

- 245 Environmental governance and its implications for conservation practice
Derek Armitage, Rob de Loë, and Ryan Plummer
- 256 Conservation in tropical Pacific Island countries: why most current approaches are failing
Gunnar Keppel, Clare Morrison, Dick Watling, Marika V. Tuiwawa, and Isaac A. Rounds

Policy Perspectives

- 266 iREDD hedges against avoided deforestation's unholy trinity of leakage, permanence and additionality
Penny van Oosterzee, James Blignaut, and Corey J. A. Bradshaw
- 274 Acting fast helps avoid extinction
Tara G. Martin, Simon Nally, Andrew A. Burbidge, Sophie Arnall, Stephen T. Garnett, Matt W. Hayward, Linda F. Lumsden, Peter Menkhorst, Eve McDonald-Madden, and Hugh P. Possingham
- 281 Mainstreaming ecosystem services through reformed European agricultural policies
Tobias Plieninger, Christian Schleyer, Harald Schaich, Bettina Ohnesorge, Holger Gerdes, Mónica Hernández-Morcillo, and Claudia Bieling
- 289 How indeterminism shapes ecologists' contributions to managing socio-ecological systems
Sarah Michaels and Andrew J. Tyre
- 296 Sustaining conservation values in selectively logged tropical forests: the attained and the attainable
Francis E. Putz, Pieter A. Zuidema, Timothy Synnott, Marielos Peña-Claros, Michelle A. Pinard, Douglas Sheil, Jerome K. Vanclay, Plinio Sist, Sylvie Gourlet-Fleury, Bronson Griscom, John Palmer, and Roderick Zagt

Letters

- 304 Migration links ocean-scale competition and local ocean conditions with exposure to farmed salmon to shape wild salmon dynamics
B. M. Connors, D. C. Braun, R.M. Peterman, A. B. Cooper, J. D. Reynolds, L. M. Dill, G. T. Ruggione, and M. Krkošek
- 313 Too few data and not enough time: approaches to detecting Allee effects in threatened species
James J. Gilroy, Thomas Virzi, Rebecca L. Boulton, and Julie L. Lockwood

Correspondence

- 323 Agriculture as a key element for conservation: reasons for caution
Ben Phalan, Andrew Balmford, and Rhys E. Green
- 325 Low-impact agriculture requires urgent attention not greater caution: response to Phalan and colleagues
Hugh L. Wright, Iain R. Lake, and Paul M. Dolman

Cover description: Sockeye salmon returning to spawn in the Adams River, a tributary of the Fraser River watershed in British Columbia. For years scientists have struggled to understand what factors have been responsible for declining survival in many Fraser River sockeye salmon populations beginning in the early 1990s. In this issue, Connors et al. shed light on this mystery by simultaneously considering evidence related to multiple possible explanations for the declines in Fraser sockeye populations (pages 304–312). The researchers found that increasing numbers of pink salmon across the North Pacific Ocean appear to be leading - directly or indirectly - to increasing competition for food with Fraser sockeye salmon, especially when the juvenile sockeye salmon first migrate past large numbers of farmed salmon. These findings suggest that the effect of exposure to farmed salmon may be mediated by the state of the ecosystem, highlighting the danger of focusing only on a single factor when trying to understand declines in salmon populations. This photo was taken by Conor McCracken (www.cdimages.com) in the Adams River in the fall of 2010. The over-under image was shot by holding the camera half under and half out of the water.



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