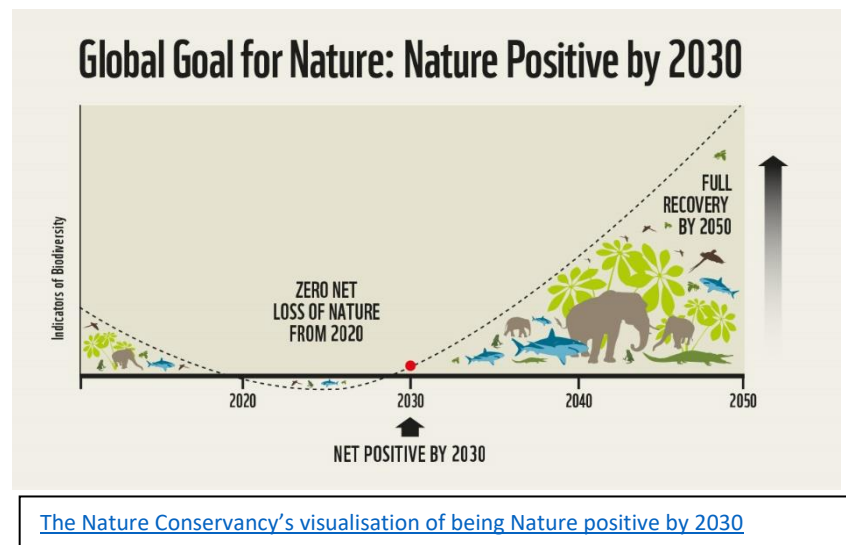


Cop15 strikes historic deal to protect 30 per cent of the Earth

In Montreal between 07 - 19 December 2022, 195 country representatives came together as part of [Cop 15, the principle UN biodiversity conference](#), where they [agreed a deal](#) to protect 30 per cent of land and sea on the planet by 2030. This has been commended by many for progressing the previous protections set in 2010 at Biodiversity COP 10 (which unfortunately were not met), however others suggest this is akin to the historic and outdated model of human-exclusive conservation known as “fortress conservation” (FC).



Definition of Fortress conservation - a method which believes biodiversity protection is best achieved by creating protected areas where ecosystems can function in isolation from human disturbance.

Although it is hard to think of this as a potentially contentious issue, the history of worldwide National Parks and other FC methods are linked with colonialism and indigenous people's abuse. Despite representing only 5 per cent of the world's population, Indigenous peoples manage 25 per cent of the world's territories and protect 80 per cent of its biodiversity, and so working with these communities is essential to the creation of thriving and functioning ecosystems.

What about the other 70%

With this form of discussion there is often the question; where does this leave the rest of the land? And that seems like the right question, if a call for an overarching statement on the reconnection and restoration of all land was made, Martin Léna from Survival International states “..we need to get to the root of the problem, which is the over-exploitation of resources for profit and over-consumption.”

Will extraction such as mining be banned in these areas?

Principally no, with Ladislav Miko, The European Commission's biodiversity envoy, saying at Cop 15 that banning extractive industries in these areas was “not realistic”. This is a worry as it suggests these protections will have similar ‘protections’ to current areas of conservation, which are extremely exploited for their resources and are failing on several areas of species recovery.

A missed opportunity?

With almost the opposite outcome from November's Climate COP 27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, many have said it was a missed opportunity to learn from the climate COP and capitalise on wins made there. With the Climate COP criticised for not strengthening collective pathways to capping global warming to within a 1.5C limit, it was praised for listening to the [Global South](#) for developing a momentous loss and damage fund for vulnerable countries suffering from climate disasters.

Whereas at the Biodiversity COP the reverse seemingly happened with the aforementioned protection of 30% of the earth but failed to establish the dedicated fund and/or finance mechanism for reaching these targets.

What's next?

Much of this information will be being processed by the respective governments and how they feel best to approach protecting areas of land and sea, this massively being influenced by the landscapes they are situated in. The Global South will continue to push for a clear finance mechanism that brings funding from economically rich countries holding them accountable for much of that funding, and the Global North continuing to push ambitious targets without truly committing the funding required.