

What can long-term data contribute to the “Land-sharing versus Land Sparing” debate?

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Global environmental challenges can only be addressed by multifaceted approaches that integrate biodiversity conservation with sustainability targets. While only 12% of the land surface is in protected areas, 40% is used for food production; the latter areas are therefore critical in managing environmental change in the Anthropocene. Proponents of land-sparing suggest that food production should be concentrated into as small an area as possible, using intensive methods, thereby freeing up land for biodiversity conservation. Land-sharing suggests that wildlife friendly farming is better for both biodiversity and sustainability. By looking at long-term trends in the management of agricultural systems, we can assess the role of traditionally managed cultural landscapes in biodiversity conservation, and their potential contribution to sustainability and managing global change.