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BY PITER KEO | JULY 9, 2024 · 11:28 PM

We humans cannot fight climate change alone

by Piter Kehoma Boll

Yes, we caused the huge mess that our planet is currently facing, but we cannot solve it alone. Who can help us? Aliens? Of course not! We need the help of our earthling fellows, all those lifeforms we have been neglecting!

[In a recent paper published in BioScience](#), Dr. Cássio Cardoso Pereira and his colleagues indicate six ways biodiversity can help us improve climate change mitigation:

- 1. Preserve existing carbon stocks and sinks instead of replacing them with others**

We know that planting trees is a good way of removing carbon from the atmosphere, but other ecosystems, such as grasslands, also stock huge amounts of carbon. Replacing grasslands with trees does not improve carbon capture but can worsen the problem, as this change in vegetation type will cause the release of all the original carbon stock. Forests are not the only important ecosystem on the planet!

- 2. Restore degraded ecosystems with the appropriate species**

Simply planting trees in a degraded area will not solve the problem. You have to use the right species! Restoration should include native species of that area, allowing that restored patch to become part of the surrounding ecosystems.

3. **Animals must be considered together with plants**

The interaction between fauna and flora is crucial for the success of any ecosystem. Plants will only flourish and do their job as carbon stocks efficiently with the aid of animals to help with pollination, seed dispersion, fertilization and more!

4. **No new areas for human use**

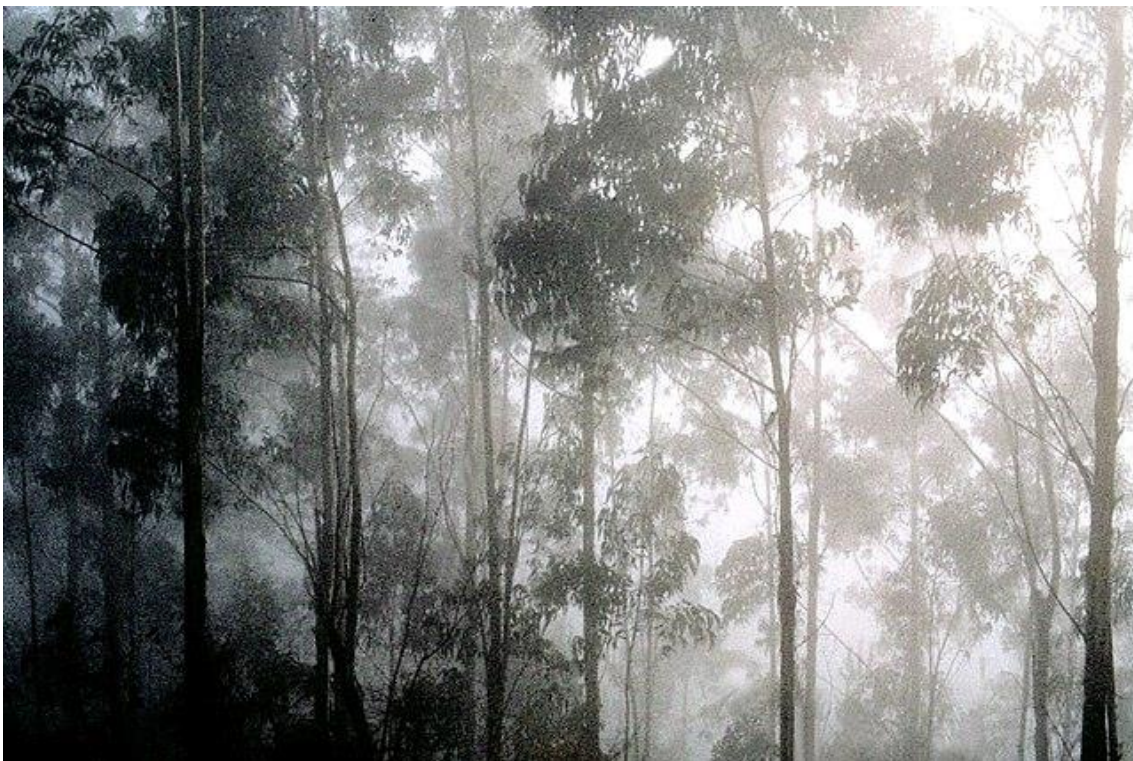
We need to find effective ways to use the existing areas of pasture for cattle, crops and tree plantations. We cannot keep expanding agriculture to new areas. We have more than enough.

5. **Incorporate biodiversity into business**

Although many companies currently have goals involving climate change mitigation, few consider the conservation of biodiversity as part of it. If their goals are legitimate they should include compensation for any disturbance they cause with their activities.

6. **Unite climate and biodiversity conferences**

Biodiversity and climate change cannot be considered separately. Thus, joint world conferences addressing both issues must become the norm if we hope to be successful on either side.




Filling the world with *Eucalyptus* and pine plantations won't solve our climate crises. Photo by Luis Bartolomé Marcos.*

To implement these strategies, it is essential to make the population aware of the real threat that climate change and biodiversity loss represent for the planet. This is the only way to force companies and governments to act.

Take a look at the original article. It is free to read and uses a very accessible language!

Reference:

Pereira CC, Kenedy-Siqueira W, Negreiros D, Fernandes S, Barbosa M, Goulart FF, Athayde S, Wolf C, Harrison IJ, Betts MG, Powers JS, Dirzo R, Ripple WJ, Fearnside PM, Fernandes GW (2024) Scientists' warning: six key points where biodiversity can improve climate change mitigation. *BioScience* 74: 315–318. <https://doi.org/10.1093/biosci/biae035>

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