

The Optimal Design of Investments in Biodiversity Conservation

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Habitat loss and degradation remains the primary threat to terrestrial biodiversity and financial investment in habitat conservation efforts has become a cornerstone of the conservation movement. However, resources to support conservation are limited and what funds are available need to be deployed as effectively as possible. Drawing on examples from the US and UK, I will examine how conservation agencies and NGOs should target land acquisition strategies as well as the effective design of incentive payment schemes that aim to encourage private landowners to provide conservation benefits on their properties. I will show how a failure to consider people's responses to conservation investments alongside the needs of biodiversity leads to ineffective conservation programmes and may even risk conservation investments backfiring and sometimes doing more harm than good.

