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Joan Moranta, Cati Torres, Ivan Murray, **Manuel Hidalgo**, Hilmar Hinz, Adam Gouraguine, 2021.

[Transcending capitalism growth strategies for biodiversity conservation.](#)

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Abstract: Background: The unlimited economic growth that fuels capitalism's metabolism has profoundly transformed a large portion of Earth. The resulting environmental destruction has led to an unprecedented rate of biodiversity loss. Following large-scale losses of habitats and species, it was recognized that biodiversity is crucial to maintaining functional ecosystems. We sought to continue the debate on the contradictions between economic growth and biodiversity in the conservation science literature and thus invite scholars to engage in reversing the biodiversity crisis through acknowledging the impacts of economic growth. In the 1970s, a global agenda was set to develop different milestones related to sustainable development, including green–blue economic growth, which despite not specifically addressing biodiversity reinforced the idea that economic development based on profit is compatible with the planet's ecology. Only after biodiversity loss captured the attention of environmental sciences researchers in the early 2000s was a global biodiversity agenda implemented. The agenda highlights biodiversity conservation as a major international challenge and recognizes that the main drivers of biodiversity loss derive from economic activities. The post-2000 biodiversity agendas, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the post-2020 Convention on Biological Diversity Global Strategy Framework, do not consider the negative impacts of growth-oriented strategies on biodiversity. As a result, global biodiversity conservation priorities are governed by the economic value of biodiversity and its assumed contribution to people's welfare. A large body of empirical evidence shows that unlimited economic growth is the main driver of biodiversity loss in the Anthropocene; thus, we strongly argue for sustainable degrowth and a fundamental shift in societal values. An equitable downscaling of the physical economy can improve ecological conditions, thus reducing biodiversity loss and consequently enhancing human well-being.

Keywords: conservation strategy, degrowth, economic growth, environmental degradation, Global Biodiversity Framework, nature protection, socioeconomic metabolism, sustainable

development