

Role: Biodiversity officer at the Environment Agency



Opinion:

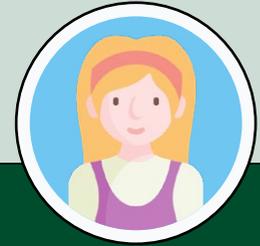
I work for the Environment Agency, who work to create a better place for people and wildlife to live.

I know rewilding improves biodiversity.

However, I believe for rewilding to work there needs to be research and trials for any species that you plan to reintroduce to the rewilded area. For instance, I have been involved in projects to trial the reintroduction of beavers at various sites around the UK in an effort to reduce flooding, restore the ecosystem and improve biodiversity. The beavers create wetlands which attract a greater variety of birds, insects and other animals. Local people have supported the projects and they have been a success.



Role: Local sheep farmer



Opinion:

I agree with the reintroduction of some species such as beavers as they have helped to stop my fields from flooding.

I do not want the Eurasian lynx or Eurasian wolf reintroduced as I am concerned they would attack, harm and maybe kill my sheep, so I would lose money.

I do not want any of my land rewilded. For land to be rewilded sheep need to stop eating the grass on it. If the land is rewilded, my sheep would have nowhere to feed so I would have to stop farming them and find another way to make money from the land.



Role: Youth rewilding
campaigner



Opinion:

I agree with rewilding as it will increase biodiversity which is good for the population of the UK as it will improve air quality and reduce the impact of climate change as there will be more plants to absorb carbon dioxide.

I agree with the reintroduction of a large number of species into Britain, including predators like the wolf and lynx, as this will help to create rewilded areas that will be sustainable and last into the future. Wolves and lynx used to live in the UK but they died out either because they were hunted to extinction or they lost their habitat.

I want to stop the government giving so much money to sheep farmers. Sheep farming reduces biodiversity because sheep eat many plants in upland areas which provide food and shelter for other animals. These other animals then find it hard to survive.



Role: Ann - Local resident



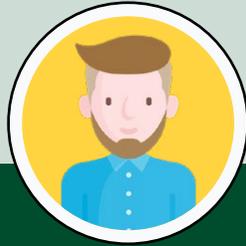
Opinion:

I agree with some parts of rewilding like the reintroduction of some species such as beavers, as they are not known to harm other animals and can be beneficial to the environment by creating wetland areas.

However, I am very concerned about the potential reintroduction of predators such as Eurasian lynx and the Eurasian wolf as there is no way to stop them moving across the land and hunting local pets and potentially hurting people.



Role: Eco-tourism travel agent



Opinion:

I agree with rewilding on a large scale because wildlife tourism brings a lot of money into the local area and a lot of money for travel agents who can arrange holidays to these areas. Since the reintroduction of beavers and white-tailed eagles to Scotland more people are travelling to those parts of Scotland where these animals live in order to see them.

I think that bringing back different species is a good thing as it will help the local economy.



Role: Campaigner for Lynx UK



Opinion:

I agree with rewilding and have a particular interest in the reintroduction of the Eurasian lynx to Kielder Forest in the North East of England.

Deer in the forest eat the trees. The population of deer in the forest has become too high so many trees are being eaten and the forest is suffering.

Each year forestry workers have to control deer numbers to reduce them. If the lynx was reintroduced it would hunt the deer, managing and reducing their population without human intervention. Fewer deer means the trees would be able to grow better and the biodiversity in the forest would improve. The Eurasian lynx are part of the cat family and are about 25% bigger than the average house cat.

I appreciate people might be scared of lynx being reintroduced but I believe this can be solved by educating people on the benefit of having lynx in the ecosystem.



Role: Campaigner for the reintroduction of wolves



Opinion:

I agree with rewilding and the reintroduction of Eurasian wolves to areas of Scotland to help control the populations of deer. Deer eat a lot of vegetation and if there are too many deer the vegetation cannot grow. Controlling the population of deer will then allow a greater variety of plants to grow and improve the biodiversity.

When wolves were reintroduced to Yellowstone National Park in the USA in 1995 there were big changes to the ecosystem. Trees grew taller, the deer population decreased, the behaviour of the deer changed so they kept away from the river banks so there was less flooding, other species of animals also started to thrive as less land was grazed by the deer so there were more plants. It has been a success and eco-tourism has increased to the area.

I appreciate people might be scared of wolves being reintroduced but I believe this can be solved by educating people on the benefit of having wolves in the ecosystem and learning to live with them.



Role: President of the British Farmers' Association



Opinion:

My job is to be a voice for all the farmers and farm workers across the country. I strongly disagree with rewilding and the reintroduction of predator species like the wolf and lynx to the UK as I think it will result in a decrease in food production.

Land that is rewilded cannot be grazed by sheep and cattle, so there will be less land to feed these animals. This means farmers will be put out of business and there will be less food for people to eat.

Also wolves and lynx will kill sheep and cattle so farmers will lose money.

I am concerned that once these species are reintroduced and breeding in the wild they would be very difficult to control and remove them if the numbers of them become too high.



Role: Wildlife ranger in a rewilded area



Opinion:

I used to be a gamekeeper managing the land to ensure that there were plenty of birds like grouse and pheasant for people to come and shoot. I used to be against rewilding because it meant that game bird shooting would have to stop and I thought I would lose my job.

However, the landowner I worked for decided to rewild his land and my job changed to a wildlife ranger where I helped to reintroduce species like the red kite, a large bird of prey, and plant lots of native trees. Planting more trees and allowing them to grow helps to reduce climate change as they absorb carbon dioxide.

As part of my job I show visitors around the land and educate them about the improved biodiversity. The visitors love to see all the different species of birds and butterflies that now flourish on the land.

Now I don't breed birds to be shot. I help lots of different species of plants and animals survive.



Role: Chris - Local resident



Opinion:

I disagree with the rewilding of large parts of the UK as I have concerns that people in local communities who work in farming or look after the land, such as game keepers, will lose their jobs.

I do agree with restoring some ecosystems in a controlled way to improve biodiversity. This includes not cutting the hedgerows and letting grass grow long on road sides. But I do not agree with rewilding large parts of our countryside.

