

Viewpoint: While wildlife habitat loss is a real problem, organic farming is not the solution

A recent article in the Independent is, in my opinion, a good example of how ideology can overwhelm evidence and logic. The article is basically an advertisement for a book, *Dead Zone* by ornithologist Philip Lymbery....

Lymbery's thesis is that bird and other animal populations are steadily declining due to modern farming. If we want to stabilize the environment, and stop or reverse this trend, we need to make major changes to how we grow our food. He then advocates for organic farming and a return to older farming practices. He blames the situation on the attempt to maximize food production.

I think that Lymbery has correctly identified a real problem – an alarming decline in wild species over the last century. However, his proposed solution would actually make the problem worse. It is a classic example of narrative or ideology getting in the way of evidence-based solutions.

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The primary difference between Lymbery's approach and reality, it seems to me, is on the relative contribution of habitat loss vs industrial farming practices. Lymbery's proposed solution (shifting to organic farming) would decrease the use of some pesticides in farming, but would not eliminate them. It would actually just cause a shift to more toxic and less effective (but "natural" pesticides). This would be a disaster.

Read full, original post: [Farming Ideology Trumps Evidence](#)