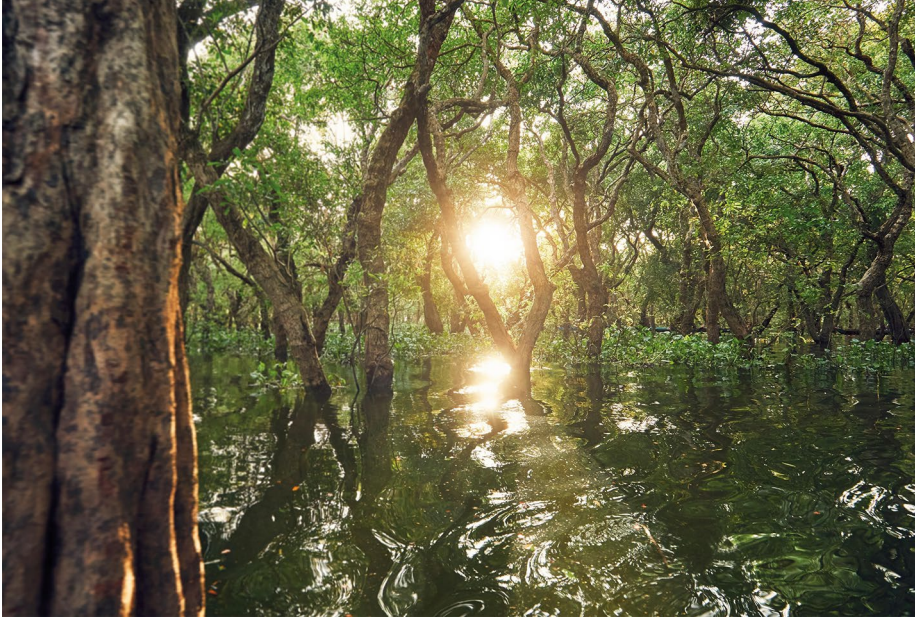


CLIMATE CHANGE

Gender balance aids conservation

Nat. Clim. Chang. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-019-0438-4>.



Credit: Jaromír Chalabala / Alamy Stock Photo

Policies that monetarily incentivize a decrease in deforestation and are targeted at collectives owning forest land are increasingly recognized as a viable option to promote conservation efforts and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. What is less-well known is how the responses of the groups targeted by such policies depend on their composition, including with regard to gender balance. Gender balance may be an important factor, though, because women often express a stronger preference for equality than men, which would directly benefit conservation efforts that aim to maintain a common good.

In a new publication authored by Nathan Cook and colleagues at the Institute of Behavioral Science at the University of Colorado, the authors report on a lab-in-the field experiment that addressed this

question. To establish whether the number of women in a group affects conservation efforts in the framework of payment for ecosystem services interventions, 55 groups of varying gender ratios received money if no trees from their forest were cut. All of the groups cut fewer trees, but the largest reduction was seen in groups in which four or more of the eight members were women.

The study highlights gender composition of the target group as a not-to-be neglected aspect of climate policies. Future studies need to explore its full potential across different conservation strategies and long-term interventions.

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