

One thing we have learnt this week – rewilding

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[640px-Beaver_lake](#) I decided to blog on something a bit different this week, rewilding. I read an article on the re-introduction of Pine Martins into the Forest of Dean. This is a small example of rewilding which covers a wide range of different things. For example I also read an article this week on the new forest to cover East-West over the North of England and the best way of encouraging the trees to seed themselves. At the extremes it can cover the reintroduction of predators such as wolves or turning over the countryside to wild countryside rather than growing things. There is a very long and unhappy human story of animal and plant introductions into countries. The Grey Squirrel was introduced into this country because it looked cute. It eats anything in the garden (believe me I know) and causes destruction if it gets in your roof (again we know). Other critters were introduced to control pests and then didn't such as the cane toad in Australia to control beetles eating sugar cane. It couldn't get at the beetles and has been eating other native species as a result. Other species were introduced to farm such as Mink in the UK for the fur trade. I don't approve of that but neither do I approve of the vivs releasing them into the wild where they have attacked various native species (also Wild Boar). Some species have been introduced by mistake (wasps in New Zealand and rats almost anywhere remote). Introduced plant species also cause chaos, such as Japanese Knotweed in the UK. A common problem of the above is when the re-introduction is at the top of the food chain. There are some things in Australasia that do eat cane toads or have learnt to eat them. The same is true of the Grey Squirrel. It's been found out recently that Pine Martins prey on them. They also eat Red's but the Red's are used to them. Greys are not. Pine Martins were killed by gamekeepers since they were believed to eat the game birds. The remaining population was found in the highlands of Scotland. Recently people have discovered the Pine Martin's are spreading south. The same has been found in the Republic of Ireland. So the rewilding to the Forest of Dean is at the low end of scale by merely re-introducing a native species from one part of the country to another where it has been eliminated. Far more controversial is to re-introduce a species that has been wiped out. That has been done with Beavers in the UK. These were hunted to extinction for their fur. One of the big problems that is going to be caused by climate change is flooding. One way of mitigating this is to dam streams up stream. This slows the water down and causes the land to absorb it. It's a big and expensive project for humans but why not get something cute to do it for nothing. As we wrote in our [book](#) there is case for turning the upland areas of Britain over to trees which could be used for all sorts of uses. I'm not sure about bringing back Wolves and Lynx though or turning most agricultural land over to the wild. Neil

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