



Rewilding Symposium

PEOPLE, POLICY & PRACTICE

How does rewilding contribute to ecosystem restoration, how does it match European and national laws and policies, how to include people and how to communicate rewilding science?

During this event, rewilding scientists and experts will address these questions by taking a multi-disciplinary perspective. With a mix of presentations, imagery, an on-site exhibition and the formal inauguration of Europe's first chair in Rewilding Ecology, the event will be packed with inspiration for scientists, policy-makers, practitioners and people interested in the field of rewilding.

FREE EVENT
ON-SITE & ONLINE

SEPTEMBER 29, 2022
9:00 - 18:00 CET

OMNIA AUDITORIUM
WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY &
RESEARCH CAMPUS





PROGRAMME

Chairs: Raquel Filgueiras (Rewilding Europe), Frank van Langevelde (Wageningen University & Research), Liesbeth Bakker (Netherlands Institute of Ecology/Wageningen University & Research)

9:00 VENUE OPEN, ARRIVAL WITH COFFEE AND TEA

10:00 OPENING & WELCOME
Liesbeth Bakker

10:05 A FASCINATION FOR NATURE
Ruben Smit

As an ecologist and award-winning filmmaker Ruben focuses on ecosystems to translate scientific research into holistic, public stories. His fascination for nature and how scientists can learn from this approach is the fundament of this lecture.

10:30 RESTORATION, REWILDING AND THE SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND
Eric Higgs

Eric addresses what we can learn from common features and differences in restoration practices, and how this can strengthen the regeneration of wild places and the human relationships that support and depend on them.

11:00 TEA/COFFEE BREAK

11:30 MEGAFAUNA RESTORATION AS AN OBLIGATION
Arie Trouwborst

Restoring populations of large mammals (megafauna) is a key element of rewilding. Arie addresses the role of law regarding the restoration of Europe's megafauna.

12:00 REWILDING OPPORTUNITIES UNDER THE EU NATURE RESTORATION LAW
Sofie Ruysschaert

The EU's Nature Restoration Law proposal can be a game-changer if implemented well. Sofie presents ambition and improvements needed for the Nature Restoration Law, and how rewilding can fit into the larger implementation framework.

12:30 LUNCH BREAK

13:30 REWILDING LANDSCAPES IN EUROPE – A PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVE
Frans Schepers

Rewilding is 90% about people, 10% about nature. From that perspective, Frans will share Rewilding Europe's experiences, findings and views on how rewilding narratives can be built and put into practice in a diverse European context.

13:50 REWILDING IN ACTION: THE SHORT FILM 'ZIMBRUL'

14:05 ON THE EUROPEAN BISON'S REWILDING HOOVES: HOW TO VISUALIZE IT?
Lisa Sánchez Aguilar

Lisa evaluates the development of effective infographics, animations and virtual reality for scientific communication, based on the rewilding of the European bison. An exhibition of her work will be on display at the venue during the symposium.

14:30 THE NATURE AND NECESSITY OF HUMAN REWILDING
Koen Arts

Rewilding is often understood as a form of ecological management in which humans are merely bystanders. Koen argues that rewilding should include humans too. To address the root cause of global environmental crises, human rewilding is a necessity.

15:00 TEA/COFFEE BREAK

16:00 INAUGURAL LECTURE: THE ECOLOGY OF REWILDING LANDSCAPES
Liesbeth Bakker

Liesbeth addresses the ecology of rewilding landscapes in aquatic and terrestrial habitats, the science of rewilding and the opportunities of solving multiple crises at once, including biodiversity and climate change, using a rewilding approach.

17:00 RECEPTION

**REGISTER FOR
ON-SITE EVENT**

**REGISTER FOR
ONLINE EVENT**

**LIESBETH BAKKER**

*Netherlands Institute of Ecology
Wageningen University & Research*

Liesbeth is a wildlife and wetland ecologist at the Netherlands Institute of Ecology and Special Professor in Rewilding Ecology at Wageningen University & Research. How water dynamics and wildlife return affect biodiversity and ecosystem functions in human-dominated landscapes is her core interest. By combining rewilding science and practice she aims to advance ecosystem restoration with more room for natural processes.

**RUBEN SMIT**

Ruben Smit Productions

Ruben is a passionate ecologist, photographer and filmmaker. He communicates science to the public with his photos, documentaries (The River That Lives) and films, including The New Wilderness (De Nieuwe Wildernis), the Waddensea (WAD) and, most recently, the Black-tailed godwit (Grutto!). His mission is to inspire people to seek out and experience nature through his imagery.

**ERIC HIGGS**

University of Victoria, Canada

Eric is a professor at the University of Victoria where he works on ecological restoration and he served as chair of the global Society for Ecological Restoration. His interests include hybrid and novel ecosystems, a concept he co-founded. He published a book on Nature by Design and co-edited the book Novel Ecosystems. He has a strong interest in future oriented ecosystem restoration.

**ARIE TROUWBORST**

Tilburg University

Arie is Associate Professor of Environmental Law at Tilburg University, interested in understanding and improving the contribution of international, European and national law to the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of the environment, particularly biodiversity. He has published widely in this area and frequently conducts advisory work for (inter)governmental bodies and NGOs. Much of his recent research concerns megafauna.

**SOFIE RUYSSCHAERT**

Birdlife Europe & Central Asia

Sofie is Nature Restoration Policy Officer at BirdLife Europe and Central Asia, based in Brussels. She is a motivated biologist with a PhD in Applied Biological Sciences. Balancing the human-nature interface has been the common thread throughout her career so far. Currently, she is advocating hard to keep the ambition of the proposed EU Nature Restoration Law and get it improved where needed.

**FRANS SCHEPERS**

Rewilding Europe

Frans is co-founder and Executive Director of Rewilding Europe, leading this cross-European initiative with team members now working from 17 different countries and in 10 large rewilding landscapes, where wild nature and wildlife bounce back and where people benefit. Under his leadership, Rewilding Europe has become a frontrunner initiative, taking both a demonstrating and a catalysing role in rewilding as a new conservation narrative for Europe.

**LISA SANCHEZ AGUILAR**

University of Groningen

Lisa is a scientific illustrator and graphic designer from Costa Rica. She's currently doing an interdisciplinary PhD between art and natural sciences in the Conservation Ecology Group of the University of Groningen. Her research delves into the use of visual communication in rewilding with emphasis on the enrichment of knowledge of the public about the European bison and its ecology.

**KOEN ARTS**

Wageningen University & Research

Koen is a Lecturer at the Forest and Nature Conservation Policy Group. He focuses on human dimensions of nature conservation and works often from a political ecology perspective on human-wildlife interaction, community-based conservation and rewilding. He tries to promote more sustainable human-nature relationships in other ways too, through the development of practical nature skills courses, and through book writing aimed at a general readership.