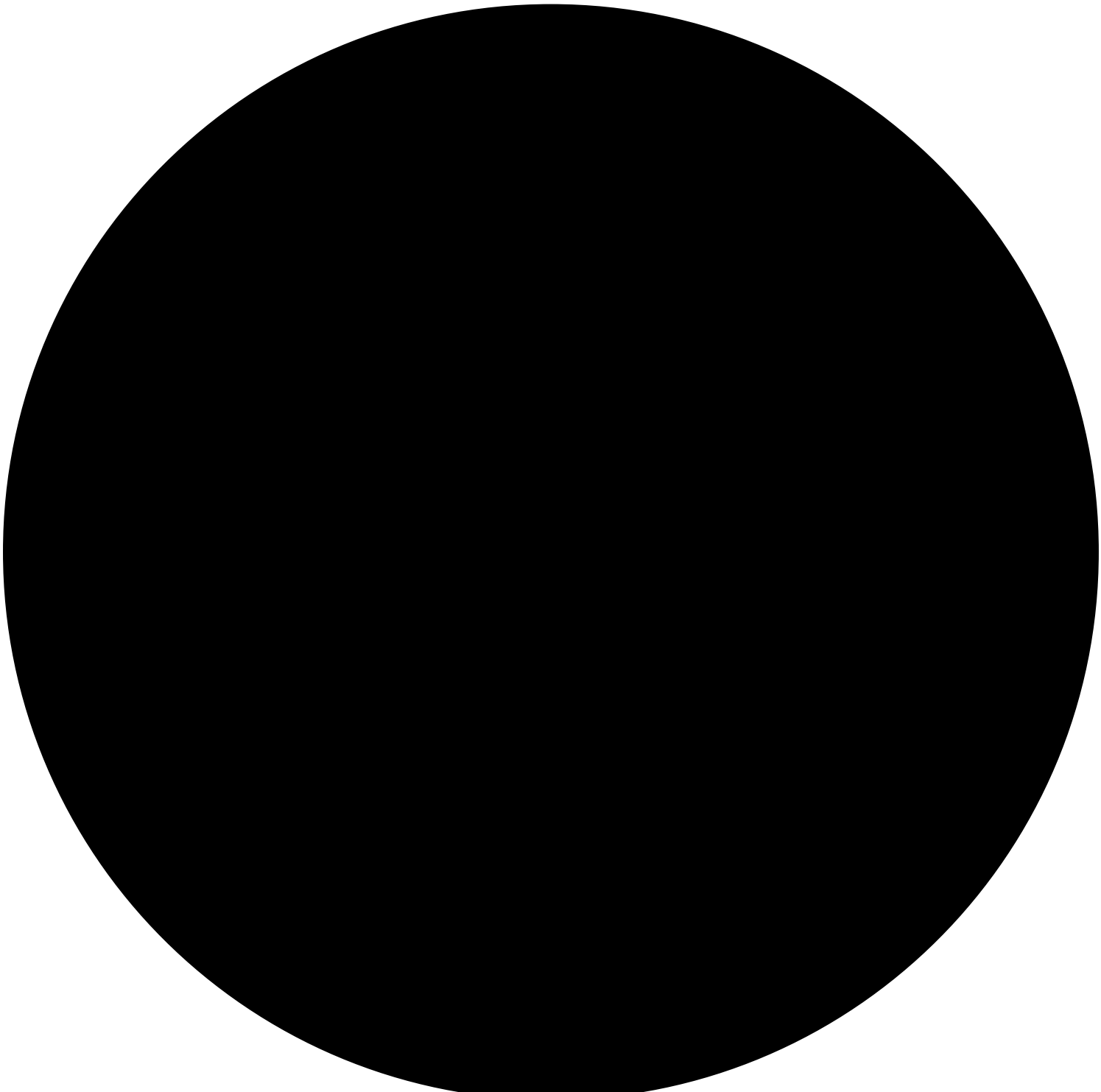


HOW HAS OUR VIEW OF NATURE CHANGED?

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Our view of the importance of nature and our place in it has changed drastically over the centuries. The current vision has a great influence on environmental conservation, both from a scientific point of view and political decision-making. The following shows the **chronology** of how the vision of nature conservation has changed in recent decades:

<1960: Nature itself

Until the 1960s, thinking about environmental conservation was centered on *idealistic thinking about nature*, where it was considered that nature, the less altered and anthropized, the better. Nature had intrinsic value, *per se*, where conservation focused on the value of *wildness* and *undisturbed* nature reserves. One could relate this thought to the *hippie* movement.

1970-1980: Nature despite the human being

When it became obvious that human activities had a *negative impact* on nature (industrial pollution, etc.), we realized that the previous paradigm was not enough to preserve the environment. The conservation paradigm turned towards the importance of the human impact on plant and animal species, as well as the study of methods to reduce such impacts. As a consequence, *protected areas* increased their presence and importance, thus becoming the main conservation tool.

1990: Nature for the human being

In the 1990s, conservation had already taken a more *holistic view of nature*. Society then began to appreciate the importance of nature in maintaining our well-being and quality of life. Here, [ecosystem services](#) began to be seen as crucial to providing clean water and air, food, minerals, and many other goods and services. . Conservationists began to consider new metrics to measure the contribution of nature, such as minimum viable population sizes (of species), ecosystems, among others.

2000-2010: Nature and the human being

The next paradigm shift was based on the valuation, especially *economic*, of long-term relationships between human beings and nature. Ecosystem services became increasingly valuable, and it began to be accepted that nature provides more benefits than initially thought, including more abstract benefits. The objective became the sustainable production and exploitation of the environment in the *long term*.

> 2020: The re-integration of humans into nature?

And now, where is nature conservation headed? Our main objective should be to integrate our productive and economic system into the natural cycles of the ecosystems. That is, co-evolve together, and as part of, nature. For this, there are already countless frameworks that are beginning to be applied both at the governmental and business level: [circular economy](#), [sustainable development goals \(SDGs\)](#)...

The vision and focus that we use to conserve the environment will be vital for the design of conservation policies and for selecting those indicators that assess their success. However, **there is a problem**: the techniques available to scientists do not always keep pace with ideological changes (such as those mentioned above). The latter are advancing faster, since society and politics change their thinking at a faster rate than the methods available to scientists to "measure nature." **The consequence?** *the friction between science and politics*. In the long term, a joint and more stable vision of nature conservation would be necessary, which integrates all the conservation perspectives mentioned above. In this way, we would be allowing science to "catch up" with us, thus being able to develop more effective methods to manage nature.

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There are no comments yet.