



An Ecology of Happiness

Eric Lambin

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We know that our gas-guzzling cars are warming the planet, the pesticides and fertilizers from farms are turning rivers toxic, and the earth has run out of space for the mountains of unrecycled waste our daily consumption has left in its wake. We've heard copious accounts of our impact—as humans, as a society—on the natural world. But this is not a one-sided relationship. Lost in these dire and scolding accounts has been the impact on us and our well-being. You sense it while walking on a sandy beach, or in a wild, woody forest, or when you catch sight of wildlife, or even while gardening in your backyard. Could it be that the natural environment is an essential part of our happiness? Yes, says Eric Lambin emphatically in *An Ecology of Happiness*. Using a very different strategy in addressing environmental concerns, he asks us to consider that there may be no better reason to value and protect the health of the planet than for our own personal well-being.

In this clever and wide-ranging work, Lambin draws on new scientific evidence in the fields of geography, political ecology, environmental psychology, urban studies, and disease ecology, among others, to answer such questions as: To what extent do we need nature for our well-being? How does environmental degradation affect our happiness? What can be done to protect the environment and increase our well-being at the same time? Drawing on case studies from Asia, Africa, Europe, and North America, Lambin makes a persuasive case for the strong link between healthy ecosystems and happy humans.

Unique in its scope and evenhanded synthesis of research from many fields, *An Ecology of Happiness* offers a compelling human-centered argument that is impossible to overlook when we marvel at murmurations of starlings or seek out the most brilliant fall foliage: nature makes our steps a little lighter and our eyes a little brighter. What better reason to protect an ecosystem or save a species than for our own pleasure?

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