

# Revisiting Trends in Conservation Research on Private Lands Over the Past 20 Years

## Introduction

More than half of the land in the US is privately owned, yet findings from Hilty and Merelender's 2003 paper suggest that most conservation research is done on public land.

This study aims to reassess the proportion of conservation research done on private lands since the 2003 Hilty and Merelender paper.



## Private Land ...

- Is generally more productive than public land (Scott et al., 2001)
- Holds critical habitat for many endangered species within the US. (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1994)
- Offers an opportunity to engage and involve new people in conservation (Gooden & t'Sas-Rolfe, 2019)

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## Materials and Methods

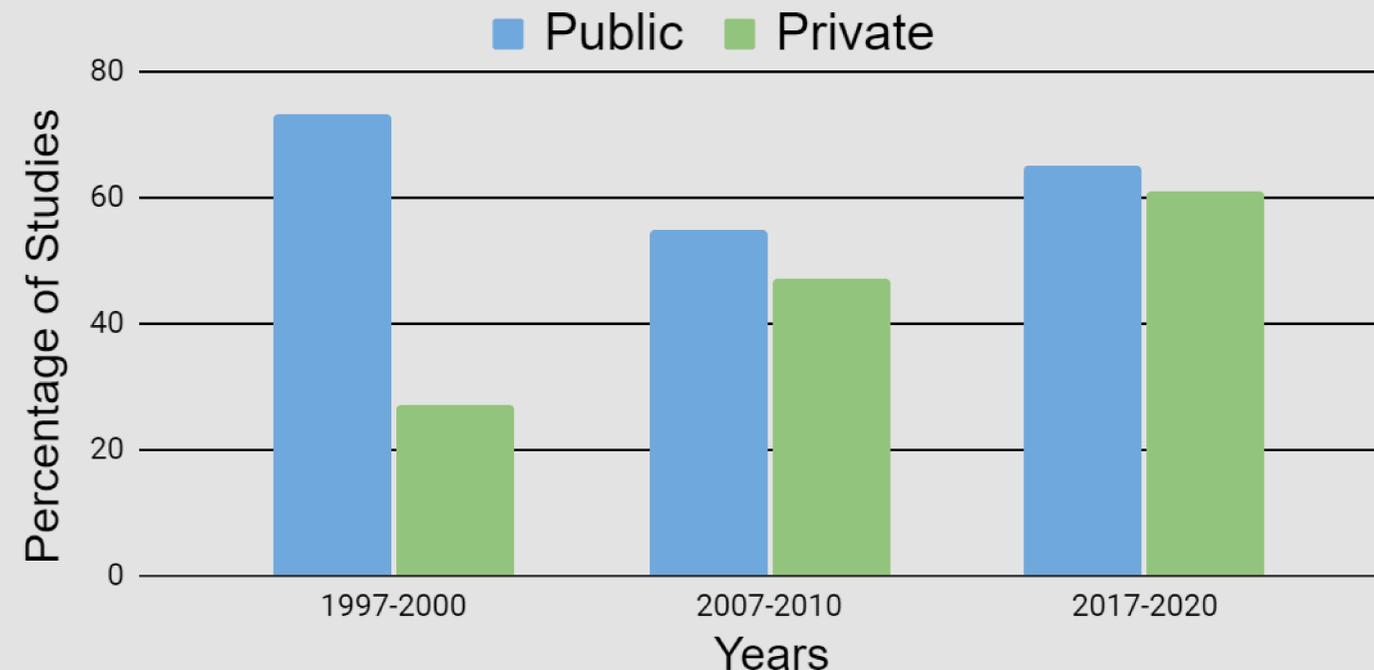
We imported and reviewed all the articles from *Conservation Biology*, *Biological Conservation*, *Conservation Science and Practice*, and *Conservation Letters* published from between 2007 - 2010 and between 2017-2020. In accordance with the methods used in Hilty and Merelender's 2003 paper, we only included articles where researchers conducted biological science on terrestrial sites with field-based research methods.



## Preliminary Results and Discussion

At this point, we have completed the review process for 637 articles. Of those 637 articles, 175 met our inclusion criteria. Since the Hilty and Merelender analysis spanned 3 years (1997-2000), similarly we analyzed our articles in 3-year bins at the end of each decade. Of the 175 articles in our analysis, 118 were published between 2007-2010 and 57 were published between 2017-2020. Our analysis indicates an increase in the proportion of research on private lands over the last two decades.

## Ownership of Study Sites



## Conclusions

While our preliminary results indicate an encouraging increase in the proportion of conservation research done on private lands, we still have 4,634 more studies to review.



Future studies can utilize our database of articles to investigate other trends in the conservation literature, such as the proportion of research done on various taxa.

## Literature Cited

- Hilty, J & Merelender, A. 2003. Studying Biodiversity on Private Lands.
- Gooden, J & t'Sas-Rolfe, M. 2019. A review of critical perspectives on private land conservation in academic literature.
- Scott, M, et.al. 2001. Nature Reserves: Do They Capture the Full Range of America's Biological Diversity.
- U. S. General Accounting Office. 1994. Endangered Species Act: Information on Species Protection on Nonfederal Lands.

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