



ANSEL ADAMS

WHAT HAS **NATURE** EVER DONE FOR US?

HOW MONEY REALLY DOES GROW ON TREES

BY **Tony Juniper** FOREWORD BY **HRH The Prince of Wales**

The Orbit of Tony Juniper

The passionate environmentalist talks about his new book and his desire to educate others about a healthy planet and a healthy life.

BY DEBORAH LINDQUIST

During recent years, environmental debate worldwide has been dominated by climate change, carbon emissions and the greenhouse effect. But a number of academic, technical, political, business and NGO initiatives indicate the emergence of a new wave of environmental attention focused on “natural capital,” “ecosystem services” and

“biodiversity,” things nature does for us.

As a leading environmentalist and special adviser to the Prince of Wales’ International Sustainability Unit, Tony Juniper has a unique and learned perspective, having studied, advised, and campaigned for environmental issues over the last 30 years.

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In his book, *What Has Nature Ever Done for Us?* Juniper points out: “As a species we think that everything nature does for us — providing water, pollinating plants, generating oxygen, recycling miracles in the soil and much more — is free, but it isn't. Its economic value can, and has been, measured. And upon realizing what that value truly is, we would stop treating our natural systems in a destructive manner. For example, in 2005 Hurricane Katrina cost the US \$81 billion and the damage still remains. If the land around the levees hadn't been redeveloped for shipping and aquaculture, at an estimated value of \$100,000 to \$450,000 per square mile of natural mangroves, then, it is believed, much of the damage caused to the city would not have occurred.”

“Nature gives us everything, and it gives us life. The destruction of nature will ultimately lead to our own destruction. We are ignoring the very thing that is truly our life support system. When nature suffers, we do too because without nature we have no life,” he adds.

A sobering but realistic viewpoint.

When asked what the book was about, during our phone conversation, Juniper explains: “What this book is all about is an explanation of what nature does for us, why it is so important, and what we can do to ensure nature keeps on doing it.”

He continues, “Unfortunately most of the people reading scientific reports about the environment are scientists. The task of conveying this information to a bigger number of people is my most important job. For instance, I prefer to use the word ‘nature’ over the word ‘environment’ because people relate to it better. Unfortunately, most people don't realize what nature really does for us.”

He further outlines the points made in *What Has Nature Ever Done For Us?*

About natural resources: “When we speak about natural resources, they often become things that we take for granted. Our fresh water, healthy soil, air quality, pollinating insects, climate stability, and so many more essential services are all things that exist in nature but have true economic value. Natural resources are not just a set of raw materials we are

provided with for free, but things we need to maintain and protect. The word ‘nature’ in itself has an implication about our true relationship with the rest of creation.”

Our air quality, quality of our water supplies, even our soil is suffering. We as human beings are sicker than ever before. Many people are on a cocktail of medications to treat everything from anxiety to cancer.

“When nature suffers, we do too because without nature we have no life.”

~Tony Juniper

What medical professionals say: “In my meetings recently with medical professionals, their findings are: “research indicates that in the treatment of psychological conditions such as stress, the idea of taking time in nature has been found to be an even better treatment than mainstream drug treatments.”

On how to ‘view’ natural resources: “The leap of insight that the book is trying to communicate is that we need to see our natural resources as valuable, and that we are ultimately in the same lifeboat as nature.”

As Prince Charles points out in the book's forward: “The services and countless benefits to the human economy that come from Nature have an estimated value every year of around double the global Gross Domestic Product, and yet this colossal contribution to human wellbeing is hardly ever mentioned when countries consider how to create future growth.”

Juniper offers a profound example of such a cost: A story about vultures and their relationship to the health and wellbeing of human beings in India.

“Anti-inflammatory drugs administered to cattle and buffalo in India ended up costing the country 63 billion dollars. How? By poisoning and killing the vultures that clean up the dead carcasses of these creatures. It is estimated that 40 million vultures



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were responsible for cleaning up 1.2 million tonnes of flesh each year. The death of these very important vultures thereby created a chain reaction that led to an explosion in the population of the country's wild dogs who now had more food. More dogs led to more dog bites, creating rabies infections in people. Not only did rabies kill tens of thousands of people, it cost the country billions of dollars.”

How do our children experience nature today? Do they spend their time connected to ... iPads, televisions, or computers? Or does their education in life and in school involve experiencing nature first hand? If our children don't learn about and experience nature, they will understand it even less than our political leaders do today. Help them understand its worth.

Because, as Juniper points out, “It's a simple truth that nature is good for you.”

Nature is balanced. We need to be, too.

Tony Juniper frequently lectures on environmental and sustainability issues. He also writes extensively and contributes to a wide range of publications.

What Has Nature Ever Done for Us? his first book, published in the UK in January 2013, where, following many favorable reviews, it quickly became a best seller.

The North American edition will be published in the US by Synergetic Press in August 2013.



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