

Economics 260A
Natural Resource Economics
Fall 2007

1. The rise of ITQ policies for managing fisheries is one of the big success stories in natural resource economics, yet several economists have recently proposed either alternative policies or supplementary policies to deal with allocation problems ITQs are ill-equipped to handle. Review the literature on ITQs and their possible successors.
2. Several authors have concluded that natural resource abundance is a 'curse' for the nations where these resources are found, leading to slow growth and failed governance. Review the literature on the 'resource curse' and the debate on whether or not it is a real phenomenon.
3. What policies have economists proposed for avoiding dependence on foreign energy? What theoretical arguments and/or empirical evidence have been offered to support particular goals or policy instruments?
4. The practice of setting aside regions of the oceans as marine reserves, with all harvesting and some other activities prohibited, is a policy favored by many marine scientists. Review the economic literature on the role for marine reserves in fisheries management and marine resource management more broadly.
5. One of the arguments offered for protecting biodiversity is that its genetic information may prove highly valuable in developing new pharmaceuticals. While there clearly are other sources of value for biodiversity, researchers differ on whether or not pharmaceutical values alone can justify significant expenditures for biodiversity preservation. Review and evaluate the existing literature.
6. Deforestation is regarded as an environmental problem due to effects on atmospheric carbon because natural forests provide habitat for species. Review the literature on the economic causes of deforestation and possible policy responses. Evaluate recent evidence on the pace and pattern of deforestation as part of your review.
7. A prominent policy for preventing species extinction is the Convention in International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), an agreement that prohibits on trade in products derived endangered species. Review the literature on the efficacy of CITES in this role.
8. What policies other than prohibitions on trade in products derived endangered species have economists proposed for protecting species? Review the literature on such policies.
9. The Endangered Species Act is the most important piece of federal regulation related to protecting species from extinction in the US. Review the literature on the effectiveness of ESA as a regulatory approach for controlling species extinction.
10. The forest products industry in North America and worldwide is making a transition from harvesting 'wild' trees from natural forests to growing forest products in high yield plantations, sometimes using high-yield exotics. Review the literature on the recent history of this transition and on likely implications for natural habitats.