Journal of Rural Studies 98 (2023) 80–91

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Rural Studies

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jrurstud

Who decides? The governance of rewilding in Scotland 'between the cracks': community participation, public engagement, and partnerships

Alison Martin [a,*], Anke Fischer [b], Rob McMorran [c]

[a] Inverness College, University of the Highlands and Islands, 1 Inverness Campus, Inverness, IV2 5NA, Scotland, UK
[b] Division of Environmental Communication, Department of Urban and Rural Development, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, P.O. Box 7012, 750 07, Uppsala, Sweden
[c] Rural Economy, Environment and Society and Rural Policy Centre, Scotland's Rural College, Peter Wilson Building, Kings Buildings, West Mains Road, Edinburgh, EH9 3JG, Scotland, UK

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Ecological restoration
Empowerment
Land ownership
Land reform

ABSTRACT

Rewilding is a conservation approach which seeks to restore natural processes and ecosystem functionality. However, it also has a strong social dimension, characterised by a recently increasing emphasis on the place of people in rewilding. The role of local communities and the need for public engagement have become a specific concern for many contemporary rewilding efforts. Research on the role of participation in rewilding is however lacking, with rewilding governance in general being under-explored. Our examination of understandings and practices of rewilding governance, through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in Scotland, illustrated a range of conceptualisations and approaches. It became apparent that governance and participatory practices were very variable and selective, highlighting an interaction between land ownership and degrees of empowerment which underpinned rewilding activity and decision-making. Approaches ranged from relatively ubiquitous advocacy for public engagement with a pre-prescribed rewilding agenda, through the circumscribed participation of defined communities (mainly of interest) in specific activities, to much more involved and empowering but self-selecting partnerships (with other landowners) to achieve impact at scale. Key challenges to more participatory approaches in rewilding identified included: i) a strong conservation imperative; ii) concentrated ownership, and power and control over land; and iii) emerging ideas about the public interest. These influenced perceptions about the value, and the practice of greater representation in rewilding decisions, ultimately bounding and limiting the participation of communities and the public.

1. Introduction

Since the 1990s, there has been a documented shift towards more participatory and deliberative practices in governance, including governance in the environmental arena (Bäckstrand et al., 2010; Bulkeley and Mol, 2003a; Evans, 2012). This shift reflects the idea that wider public representation in governance processes and participatory decision-making can help to reduce conflict and increase acceptability, is more equitable, and can improve the quality of the decisions being made (Bulkeley and Mol, 2003b); not least because of the potential locally specific impact of environmental problems, their uncertainty and unpredictability, and the value of local knowledge (The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1998). However, terms such as participation remain poorly defined and even less consistently enacted across a range of decision-making contexts (Bishop and Davis, 2002; Cass, 2006).

In Scotland, a trend of increasing reference to the participatory aspects of environmental governance is apparent in the current discourse and practice of rewilding. Rewilding is a conservation approach which broadly seeks to restore natural processes and ecosystem functionality (du Toit and Pettorelli, 2019; Pettorelli et al., 2019), and to utilise nature's autonomy as one possible solution to the myriad challenges of the Anthropocene (Carver et al., 2021; Lorimer et al., 2015; Svenning et al., 2016). Importantly, from a governance perspective, there has been a recent conceptual shift within Scottish rewilding discourse. This has moved from a primary focus on ecological concepts and arguments towards an increasing emphasis on the role of people, specifically local rural communities, and the need for public 'engagement' and

* Corresponding author. at: Inverness College, UHI, 1 Inverness Campus, Inverness, IV2 5NA, Scotland, UK.
E-mail address: alison.martin.ic@uhi.ac.uk (A. Martin).

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2023.01.007
Received 3 May 2022; Received in revised form 18 November 2022; Accepted 16 January 2023
Available online 13 February 2023
0743-0167/© 2023 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

'involvement' with rewilding to achieve wider social acceptability (Martin et al., 2021). Despite greater discussion and interest in participatory ideas, we argue that the governance of rewilding in many instances remains concentrated around those who are already included in decision-making, primarily through virtue of owning land, and this context bounds participatory practice in very specific ways. We propose that investigating conceptualisations and practices of participation is important in its own right, as generally "*questions of governance* [in rewilding] *are under-explored*" (Holmes et al., 2020: p79). By examining the challenges of developing meaningful participatory approaches in Scottish rewilding governance, we also hope to provide an improved understanding of rewilding practice, in particular the management of emerging conflicts, and of the societal shifts seeking greater participatory decision-making in land-use more broadly.

Globally, rewilding is a topical issue (World Wilderness Congress, 2020; Global Rewilding Alliance, 2021) and the associated activities of species reintroduction and habitat restoration, including natural regeneration in response to land abandonment, are a potentially significant change in land management and conservation (Navarro and Pereira, 2015; Perino et al., 2019). The rewilding paradigm has emerged in recent decades in response to a range of pressures including biodiversity loss, widespread habitat loss and fragmentation, and associated problems such as soil loss, flooding, pollution, and climate change (Brown et al., 2012; Carver et al., 2021). This is in addition to concerns that more traditional conservation approaches have been failing (Ehrlich and Pringle, 2008; Soulé, 1991). Originally associated with North American wilderness and the *"three Cs: Cores, Corridors and Carnivores"* of Soulé and Noss (1998: p5), concerned with ecological function and trophic cascades, rewilding has since become a broader social and cultural concept. Thirty years of negotiation in the social construction of rewilding have seen the development of multiple definitions and meanings (Jørgensen, 2015; Prior and Ward, 2016; Thomas, 2021). Its relationship to land use in the culturally layered, human landscapes which dominate the globe presents particular challenges (Drenthen, 2018a, 2018b; Gammon, 2018), not least the potential for conflict (Carver, 2016; Skogen et al., 2008; Wynne-Jones et al., 2018). Attempts have been made to categorise rewilding practice (Corlett, 2016a, 2016b) including recent efforts to recapture an applied ecological definition (Pettorelli et al., 2019; Sandom et al., 2019). However, rewilding still lacks specificity and there are continued debates about what it means, what it should mean, and how this translates into practice (Hayward et al., 2019; Klop-Toker et al., 2020).

Thus far, there is no government policy mechanism specifically devoted to 'rewilding' in the UK or wider Europe. This is despite a rise in initiatives describing themselves as rewilding or associating with a rewilding approach (Lorenzen, 2020), and a UK parliamentary debate about rewilding's potential to tackle climate and ecological breakdown (UK Government, 2019). However, although some argue that the requirements of policy and management e.g., targets and monitoring, and specific features of rewilding such as experimentation may be fundamentally incompatible (Pettorelli et al., 2018; Root-Bernstein et al., 2018; Schulte to Bühne et al., 2021), the rewilding-policy gap is to some degree an issue of terminology, as there are a number of existing policy areas which are consistent with elements of the approach. These include policies that aim to encourage a renewal of land management e.g., emphasize restoration (NatureScot, 2015), discourage potentially damaging practices e.g., grouse moor licensing (Scottish Government, 2019), or protect wild areas e.g., mapping of Wild Land Areas in Scotland and EU wilderness legislation (Carver et al., 2012; European Parliament, 2008). Rewilding also reflects an increasing shift from a focus on nature protection, to incentivising restoration and ecosystem recovery with the development of approaches such as payments for ecosystem services, nature-based solutions, and natural capital accounting situated within commitments to net zero (Scottish Government, 2020). This all creates a diverse and shifting governance landscape, which presents challenges and opportunities for rewilding, but no dedicated framework for rewilding governance or for participatory process in rewilding decisions.

In Scotland, the context for land use is evolving rapidly, in large part, due to the UK leaving the European Union and exiting mechanisms such as the Common Agricultural Policy. With respect to land use governance in Scotland, most requirements for participatory practices outwith the planning system, are thus far voluntary, guidance-based, or loosely defined principles e.g., the 'community collaboration and engagement' promoted through land reform (Scottish Government, 2017). Until relatively recently, rewilding in Scotland has tended to be a niche pursuit, associated with discrete areas of land (an estate or reserve) owned and governed by a private individual or a single organisation (Deary and Warren, 2017). However, during our research, we identified varied and emerging governance arrangements advocated by rewilding proponents and practiced across an increasing number of rewilding projects, situated within a discourse about widening engagement (Martin et al., 2021). These arrangements highlighted a growing interest in partnership and interaction within rewilding with participatory processes involving communities, the public and landowners. Our study therefore set out to: (i) explore how rewilding proponents were addressing governance and expectations around democratisation and participation; (ii) investigate the nature of participation in rewilding governance, with a focus on the role of communities in decision making; and (iii) examine the implications for rewilding and land use decision-making in general.

2. Conceptual lens

2.1. Environmental governance

The value of exploring environmental governance to understand environmental challenges, conflicts, and their potential solutions has been demonstrated by numerous studies (e.g., Boyd, 2008; Mol and Carter, 2006; Ostrom, 1990). Governance, i.e., "*the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs, including both formal i.e., codified, and informal mechanisms*" (Commission on Global Governance, 1995: p4), sets the context and boundaries for steering human activity. Although governance was, and often still is, widely conflated with the role of government, it is far from just policy or administrative processes enacted by the state. For some, a defining feature of governance is an expansion characterised by multi-actor governing which includes non-state actors (Newell et al., 2012). A growing neoliberalization of conservation specifically (Apostolopoulou et al., 2021), and of nature more widely (Castree, 2008), has been identified, and these studies highlight the particular role of private actors and the use of market mechanisms to govern the use of natural resources. In western countries, neoliberal ideas have played a key role in the development of environmental governance since the 1980s, reflected in programmes of deregulation and privatisation (particularly in the US and UK) and greater private sector involvement in decision-making (Bulkeley and Mol, 2003b). However, as MacLeod and Goodwin (1999) note, this is not necessarily symptomatic of a loss of state power. Ongoing developments have also seen shifts in scale and approach, with government-led processes seeking ways to bring the public, advisory bodies, and the non-profit sector into collaborative governing at various levels, as well as responding to evolving social norms e.g., questions around equity and climate justice (Evans, 2012; Lemos and Agrawal, 2006). Rewilding is firmly situated within this context, and in the next section, we examine the emerging blend of governance approaches considered specifically relevant to shaping current Scottish rewilding practice. We also reflect on the key role of participation in decision-making.

2.2. Institutional blending and assemblage

Environmental governance in the UK is now largely recognised as sitting somewhere between the market and the state and involving a

greater array of actors and institutions than pre-1980s, 'assembled' or 'blended' in a variety of ways (Adams et al., 2014; Wynne-Jones and Vetter, 2018). Hodge and Adams (2012) describe the governance of rural land, specifically for conservation, as characterised by 'institutional blending', a result of neoliberal policies and their effects on the relationship between the state and the market. They identify this blend as constituted by a variety of elements such as ownership transfer, reassignment of property rights, different categories of owner, and a shaping of incentives for land management. Subsequent research by the authors, exploring the change from state control of small protected areas for biodiversity conservation, highlights an expansion of conservation's 'territorial ambitions' and a growth in NGOs and collaborative public-private partnerships governing large-scale conservation initiatives (Adams et al., 2014). They note that while neoliberalism may create new mechanisms for pursuing conservation, it also creates new risks and challenges in terms of the balance of public and private interest in rural land, proposing, *"the achievement of public conservation goals would seem to continue to require an active and interventionist government"* (Adams et al., 2014: p585).

Based on research into the development of payments for ecosystem services (PES) in Wales, Wynne-Jones and Vetter (2018) propose to enrich Hodge and Adams's (2012) analysis with the notion of governance as 'assemblage'. They acknowledge the clear extension of market principles to the management of ecosystem processes and functions characterised by PES; however, they identify governance and policy arrangements which are considerably more mobile than blending suggests. In their view, applying an assemblage lens enables *"clearer appreciation of how the different institutional forms inter-relate as part of a broader process of negotiation and experimentation"* (Wynne-Jones and Vetter, 2018: p26). Their research highlights a more reactive decision-making process, where the acceptability of proposals is contingent on multi-actor (including public) liaison. These studies provide an important insight into the characteristics of governance arrangements relevant to rewilding in the UK, and therefore Scotland, touching on a growth in multi-actor arrangements, including partnerships, expectations around public engagement, and questions about the public and private interest in land and the role of the state.

2.3. Participatory decision-making

Lastly, participation is one of a range of conditions encapsulated by the normative notion of 'good governance' and increasingly perceived as a democratic right essential in environmental decision-making (Richards et al., 2004). There is a substantial body of literature devoted to participation and as Bishop and Davis (2002) note, participation is *"not a settled process"* (p16). Key to our exploration, building on the reflections on blending and assemblage in the previous section, is the observation that, *"by its very definition, governance allows more people to participate in governing, raising important questions concerning who is allowed to participate and how"* (Evans, 2012: p48). For our purposes here, we are interested in the degree to which those who are not the instigators of rewilding projects (e.g., the public, local communities of place or interest, neighbouring landowners etc.) participate in decision-making, with the defining characteristic of that participation being empowerment. This distinction separates practices such as informing or consulting from those achieving levels of 'citizen power' for instance partnership in collective decision making (Arnstein, 1969). Empowerment is a multi-dimensional social process and like participation there is therefore variance in definition and use of the term (Page and Czuba, 1999). This is in no small part due to its direct relationship to the notion of power, which is also noted for its ambiguities in definition (Chaudhuri, 2016). We therefore focus on a definition of empowerment linked to participants' ability specifically to make and/or influence decisions about land use. Within the Scottish context (see *Section 3*) decision-making power about land use, and therefore whether to rewild or not, is intimately connected to land ownership through property rights. In framing participation in this way, this gives preference to active and meaningful engagement (Richards et al., 2004) and ties the concept of participation to some degree of power sharing; but this is not to exclude the idea that participatory practices can take many forms between tokenism and direct democracy (Bishop and Davis, 2002) or to imply that empowerment is unidirectional and can only be granted by the more powerful to the less. Through investigating governance, and specifically participation and the degrees to which actors are empowered (or not) in decision-making processes, we can explore whose interests a rewilding approach in Scotland currently represents, and the implications of this, for current and future developments across land use governance.

3. The Scottish context

3.1. Scottish land use and its governance

In the absence of any dedicated 'rewilding' policy (see *Section 1*), changes in land use, and in land use and biodiversity policy constitute the context for rewilding in Scotland. Discussions about land use change have intensified in recent years (Community Land Scotland, 2021; SEDA, 2021), due to the impacts of Brexit and related policy shifts, but also because of a growing awareness of the climate emergency and net zero commitments, with land use considered key to possible solutions (Davies et al., 2020). A developing land reform agenda (Bryce et al., 2018; Glenn et al., 2019) further shapes the policy context in which rewilding takes place. Land reform includes objectives on diversifying land ownership, as well as transforming how decisions about land use and its management are made and by whom (Scottish Law Society, 2022). This is in response to the fact that Scotland has one of the most concentrated patterns of large-scale private land ownership in the developed world and to concerns about the negative impacts this has socially, economically and environmentally (Glenn et al., 2019). In 2017, the then newly established Scottish Land Commission developed a high-level *Scottish Land Rights and Responsibility Statement (LRRS)* (Scottish Government, 2017), setting out core principles relating to the ownership, use and management of land. It is currently a voluntary (guidance-based) framework with a focus on engagement, however if considered necessary, elements may become statutory (Scottish Land Commission, 2021a). At its heart lie the concepts of human rights, fairness, social justice, and the proposal that land be used in a way that balances private and public interests. Of direct relevance to the questions of governance explored here is one of the six original key principles which states that: *"there should be greater collaboration and community engagement in decisions about land"* (Scottish Government, 2017: p9). The statement presents a unique context for Scottish rewilding efforts, with the LRRS considered the first statement of its kind anywhere in the world.

The piloting of Regional Land Use Partnerships (RLPs) which aim to achieve *"a collaborative and inclusive approach to* supporting *decision-making",* and bring together multiple stakeholders to meet local priorities and national interests (Scottish Land Commission, 2020) builds on this, reflecting a general trend towards increased transparency and accountability in land use governance, with aspirations towards more participatory decision-making. Running in parallel is a community empowerment agenda, based on the idea that local communities are best placed to make decisions which affect them (Community Land Scotland, 2017; Scottish Land Commission, 2021b; Scottish Government, 2021a), and related work on the concept of the 'public interest'. Proposals for a public interest test in large-scale land acquisitions (over 10,000 ha or those of economic or ecological significance) are under consideration, and although *"there is no conclusive definition of what it* [public interest] *encompasses or how it is to be interpreted"* (Scottish Land Commission, 2021c), this indicates a direction of travel where interference in the market (and private interests) in specific circumstances, to ensure public benefit, may become legitimate.

3.2. Rewilding governance

Land cover in Scotland is the result of millennia of human management and use (Tipping, 1994). Some key previously native species have been absent for hundreds of years over which timescales ecosystems and culture have changed considerably (Coz and Young, 2020). As such, although proponents talk of an ideal of 'nature's autonomy' and 'natural processes' (Corlett, 2016a; Genes et al., 2019), most rewilding efforts in the UK are predicated on human intervention (at least initially, and often substantially), which is circumscribed by structural conditions (e.g., property rights), and comprises judgements on how to rewild, and who is involved in those decisions and that process. Those undertaking rewilding activities are diverse and include public bodies, private individuals, companies, conservation NGOs, charities, trusts, and communities (Holmes et al., 2020). The IUCN *Guiding principles for rewilding* state that "*rewilding requires local engagement and support*" and should "*embrace participatory approaches*" (Carver et al., 2021: p8 Principle 6). Several conservation NGOs operate organisational policies and position statements with regards to rewilding. However, these tend to be strategic and aspirational in nature rather than prescriptive. Limited reference is made to the governance or practical implementation of rewilding activities, beyond broad statements about 'partnerships', 'building alliances' with those in favour of rewilding, and 'engaging' the public and communities, or to consider "*the legitimate concerns of stakeholders*" with regards specifically to species reintroductions (Martin et al., 2021: p7).

Perhaps consequently, research explicitly investigating Scottish rewilding governance is limited (Holmes et al., 2020) and has not, to date, specifically explored participatory practices. Work by Wynne-Jones et al. (2020) identified some recent changes in terms of governance within rewilding in Britain; with a focus on the implications of biopolitical framings and conceptualisations of nature and the role of people. Their work again highlighted the proliferation of, and tensions between, new actors but also new mechanisms of finance. Meanwhile, studies by Arts et al. (2014, 2012) and Dinnie et al. (2012) have examined the implications of the recent governance shifts towards 'multi-actor' and 'multi-level' governance in Scotland in rewilding-relevant areas. Arts et al. (2014, 2012) explored the rhetoric, argumentation and governance of species reintroductions, investigating the implications of changes in governance for four core democratic principles considered key to sound decision-making: accountability, legality, legitimacy, and democratic procedure. The authors concluded that new modes of governance can appear more effective than they are in practice and may, paradoxically, even harm democratic principles. Research by Dinnie et al. (2012) sought to understand why governance changes "*reflecting a new rhetoric of partnership and stakeholder democracy*" (p3) had not helped to resolve disputes over how rural land should be managed. The authors noted the role of private property rights in limiting the success of implementing policy change, depending on (and therefore prioritising) the support and co-operation of landowners over other stakeholders. These studies demonstrate limitations in the expectations that land management delivers multiple, integrated objectives and benefits (public and private), and that combining multiple interests, undertaking inclusive participatory processes, and collaborative decision-making lead to better (e.g., fairer, more effective) environmental management against a backdrop of concentrated private land ownership. In addition, Valluri-Nitsch et al. (2018), explored high-level land use visions with land use stakeholders in Scotland, which also highlighted challenges to an agreed approach to land use governance. Whilst, perhaps unsurprisingly, there was broad agreement for more partnerships, dialogue, and collaboration, the authors found that "*the most notable differences* [between actors' views] *relate to land ownership and governance*" (p803). Several NGOs described the role of public engagement and wider involvement in land use decision-making as a key component of their visions. In contrast, private landowners hoped for greater awareness and understanding of rural land management decisions in society, but with an acceptance of the appropriateness of limited societal influence on management practices.

3.3. Community participation and conservation

Whilst there is limited research specifically on rewilding governance and therefore little detailed exploration of participation in rewilding, there is a substantial body of environmental social science literature exploring community participation and participatory approaches to governance in conservation and natural resource management, both in the UK and internationally. Globally, much research has looked at wildlife conservation and resource management practices in developing countries (in Africa, South and Central America, and Asia) and the position of indigenous communities within the governance of these initiatives (Waylen et al., 2010). However, studies such as Benjaminsen and Svarstad (2010) identify a strong participatory rhetoric that is frequently limited in practice, resulting in the continued domination of 'fortress conservation' that excludes local communities from active participation in conservation governance. Specifically within the UK, Eastwood et al. (2017) explored attempts to implement a more participatory and systemic approach to environmental management on a Scottish estate. Whilst the widely held aspiration was that this would result in a more integrated, resilient, and equitable solution to management, they found not only was this 'exceedingly challenging', but it did not always lead to improved management or greater engagement. They identified a pattern which 'oscillated' between widening and narrowing participation and integration, underpinned by three key factors which created tensions with attempts to improve and extend participation. These included: i) stewardship values (the vision for the estate and responsibility for the land); ii) organisational capacity (staff time and competing demands including financial pressures); and iii) unresolved core issues (levels of desired engagement and commercial considerations). Meanwhile, Auster et al. (2021) explored conflicts arising from the reintroduction of beavers to the river Otter in Devon, to understand how to improve engagement to address those conflicts. One of five key factors they identified was the role of shared decision-making. However, to be effective this needed stakeholders to trust their views would be considered and that they would be able to influence decision-making, with the authors highlighting the fundamental importance of empowerment. These studies all explore the complexities of enacting a desire for greater participation and stakeholder representation in decision-making. Our research builds on this, exploring the modes and structures of participation in rewilding governance, to understand what this means for decision-making, and to identify the challenges of developing meaningful participatory approaches within rewilding practice.

4. Method

4.1. Data and sampling

To investigate rewilding governance, a diverse purposive sample (Auster et al., 2021) of relevant stakeholders operating within the Scottish rewilding arena was identified for interview. This was based on a range of sources including a literature review encompassing work identifying rewilding projects across the UK (notably: Pettorelli et al., 2019; Taylor, 2011), Scottish Rewilding Alliance members (SRA, 2020), Rewilding Britain's project list (Rewilding Britain, 2021), attendance at rewilding conferences and events, and focussed internet searches. Our interviews represented a variety of arrangements in organisation, land ownership, and scale, although they are unlikely to cover all forms of rewilding governance. Whilst there are thus some limitations in terms of generalisability, the actors and projects chosen were indicative of the range of approaches emerging in Scotland and allowed an exploration of some of the key governance issues currently in rewilding.

4.2. Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken as they offered the opportunity for greater exploration into the conceptualisations, perceptions, and opinions of those engaged in rewilding related to its governance, and specifically decision-making and participation (Wilson, 2013). In total, we conducted 23 semi-structured interviews. This comprised an initial set of 12 interviews with key stakeholders engaging with rewilding discourse in Scotland, completed in 2019 (see Martin et al., 2021). The findings from these interviews informed the selection of interviewees and topics for a further 11 interviews conducted in 2020 and dedicated to a more in-depth exploration of rewilding governance (see interview topic guide in Appendix). Overall, our interviews represented 17 organisations and 11 rewilding (or rewilding-associated) projects (see Table 1). All interviewees were either involved in strategic decision-making and governance within an organisation engaged in rewilding and/or had direct responsibility for a rewilding/restoration project.

Seven interviews were undertaken with staff dedicated to managing a specific rewilding project. With a focus on governance and decision-making in rewilding within the second series of 11 interviews, there was an inevitable concentration on those who owned land (often purchased expressly for the purpose of rewilding) and thus on representatives of conservation NGOs, public bodies, and private estates. It was notably challenging finding private estates willing to participate in the research. Lastly, the research was also informed by a range of supplementary material (e.g., fieldnotes, informal discussions, social and print media), collected during the research process which indicated the wider governance context around rewilding, specifically debates about land use, ownership, and community empowerment.

4.3. Ladder of community participation

To investigate current rewilding governance ideas and practices, and what these meant for the participation of communities in rewilding, we also developed a 'participation' ladder (see Fig. 1). This was based on Arnstein's *Ladder of citizen participation* (1969) and used in the second set of 11 interviews. The figure was shown to the participants and provided a framework for discussion and analysis, adapted to directly correspond to some of the key terms used in the first round of interviews e.g., consultation and involvement, and to encapsulate conceptualisations of participation indicated by the wider research material, such as engagement, collaboration, and partnership. The use of the ladder served a dual purpose - it allowed the interviewer and interviewees to situate these concepts relationally with regards to each other, but also with regards to the overarching notion of empowerment: as they move up the rungs of the ladder, in theory, a participant becomes more active in the decision-making process.

4.4. Thematic analysis

The interview transcripts were analysed in *NVivo1.1*. Coding initially focused on examination of content and the inductive identification of themes within the material specifically relating to our research objectives and areas of interest (e.g., *governance, decision-making, people in rewilding, community*). These were then evaluated, exploring those which could be grouped and recoded into key themes (e.g., *partnership and collaboration, engagement, public interest*). The transcripts were reviewed multiple times, coded, summarised, and supplemented by evaluation of wider material allowing the iterative re-examination and refinement of the themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In the next section we present our findings, firstly exploring various modes of participation described by interviewees, and secondly, we consider key challenges to participatory rewilding governance which emerged from the data.

Table 1
Research data.

	Organisations	Interviews
Conservation NGO	7	11
Non-Conservation NGO	5	5
Public Body	4	6
Private Estate	1	1
Total	17	23

5. Findings

Although largely concentrated in the hands of conservation NGOs and private landowners, the governance of rewilding in Scotland was characterised by variety and flexibility in approach. Key actors were informed and constrained by a degree of governance structure, including organisation-specific internal policies and procedures, and external controls e.g., conservation designations, planning requirements or funding. These assemblages notwithstanding, critical decisions about rewilding appeared to be, to a large extent, in the hands of a small number of individuals and organisations, principally those who owned and controlled the land being rewilded. A key question therefore emerged relating to whether wider participation in rewilding governance (e.g., decision-making about rewilding), did or could extend beyond those individuals or discrete organisations already involved in the process. Our analysis explores this question, looking at three different modes of participation with the opening section examining in detail, the specific question of (i) *community participation in rewilding.* The subsequent two sections delve into two other forms of participation, which emerged from the data as potentially more significant, namely: (ii) *wider public engagement;* and (iii) *a move to partnership.* A second set of themes (*Sections 5.4-5.6*) explores key challenges and tensions which underpinned these modes of participation: (a) *conservation imperative vs. democratic imperative;* (b) *landownership, power, and control;* and (c) *the public interest in rewilding.*

5.1. Community participation in rewilding

Across most of our interviews, community participation in rewilding was perceived as desirable. When examined in detail however, practice varied and limitations, conditions, and difficulties emerged. There was a normative perspective that community participation was something rewilding proponents should be engaging with, but this was often aspirational, under consideration, or a work in progress. Concern was expressed about communities being able to achieve the 'right' outcomes in the right places and the perception that it may be difficult for them to represent the wider public interest and more strategic concerns beyond the local area. For example, our interviewees were keen that communities would have to consider not only local but national or strategic objectives and interests: *"there would be a slight worry there that you might be in a position where communities look at their own self-interest without making sure that the sum of all the parts add up to what is society's interest"* (GI#9 Conservation NGO). Interviewees questioned whether communities had the expertise or would inevitably become focused on more local issues, often perceived as likely to prioritise social and economic concerns rather than (or at expense of) the environment e.g., biodiversity. Interviewees also highlighted practical concerns, questioning whether community members had the capacity to participate: *"not necessarily because they are not interested,* [but] *because their lives are rotating around much more immediate concerns"* (GI#6 Conservation NGO).

Interviewees described challenges including a lack of existing structure or mechanisms e.g., management processes, for effective community participation in the rewilding endeavour. Issues raised as key to the development of wider participation included being able to ensure transparency, trust, and a route to challenging decision-making when there may be multiple and competing interests. Instances were

Steps in Community Participation	Stage
1. Which steps do you reach with the current projects / organisational approach? 2. Where does the project / organisation aspire to be, are there any difficulties? 3. Do steps relate to different communities or activities?	
The **community having primary control and responsibility** over local land use and decision-making including any rewilding activities.	7
The **community sharing the rewilding endeavour**, decision-making, and responsibilities, agreeing common goals (**formal**).	6
Active community participation in identifying, contributing to, and/or shaping rewilding decisions (**informal**).	5
Involving the community or communities in prescribed rewilding activities e.g., volunteering, open days, visitor events etc.	4
Consulting a community or communities on prescribed rewilding activities e.g., naming of a woodland, the location of planting etc.	3
Persuading communities about the specific community benefits of rewilding.	2
Informing the public including communities about the general benefits of rewilding.	1

Source: Adapted from Arnstein (1969)

Fig. 1. Ladder of community participation (with rungs numbered 1–7), and questions asked in the interviews (top of table).

described by rewilding proponents where they felt that communities (especially rural communities) had little expectation of either being consulted or participating in land use decisions. Some interviewees acknowledged this was both because there was little historical precedence for this (and therefore communities lacked experience and often confidence in this process), but it was also problematic if community involvement did not result in action or community benefit. The definition of community also mattered. Most interviewees talked about the participation of communities of interest (those already supportive of rewilding) and the practice or potential of them actively shaping some rewilding decisions (step 5, see Fig. 1). This was perceived as a relatively easy process and strongly welcomed, although often informal and always situated within an overall rewilding vision established and controlled strategically by an individual or organisation. Engagement with communities of 'other interests' (i.e., non-rewilding) was far less apparent. Several interviewees acknowledged that if you did pursue participation, you really had to be open to what people said they wanted even if this was not what you might have liked to hear.

When discussing the idea of community participation, the apex of our ladder - the community having primary control and responsibility over local land use and decision-making including any rewilding activities - was viewed as very unlikely or inappropriate, unless the community were themselves the landowner. This starkly highlighted the direct link between property rights and the power and control (plus responsibility) this conveyed over land (explored further in *Section 5.5*), and therefore the implications for widening participation in decision-making within existing rewilding projects: *"I would say we are maybe currently at 5* [active community participation] *and we're wanting to work towards 6* [community sharing the rewilding endeavour] *but I don't think that* [the organisation] *would want to go to 7* [community having primary control and responsibility] *because … we would want primary control over our bit"* (GI#5 Conservation NGO). For one interviewee step 7 was the aim, explaining that the organisation would know it had achieved its mission when it *"no longer needed to own land"* (GI#8 Conservation NGO). However, this viewpoint appeared to be unique.

Overall, interviewees described community participation in rewilding as qualified. There was a widely held aspiration that communities should be involved in how land is managed, but a significant gap in practice. Communities of shared interest were and could readily become involved. Wider participation (especially of communities of place) had to be circumscribed and was often under development: *"what we haven't really been clear on is how much influence, what the community thinks, can have on us. So, what we're thinking about now is, okay, well which bits of how we manage* [the project] *are really up for discussion with the community"* (GI#7 Public body). The final decision-making for a rewilding project had to sit ultimately with the land-owning organisation.

Across our data no-one expressed the opinion that levels of community participation needed to lessen, i.e., to move down the ladder. When discussing the ladder, the terminology used by interviewees varied; 'engagement' and 'involvement' were used interchangeably and more frequently than the term 'participation'. When asked, there was a strong normative assumption that some form of community participation should be part of rewilding governance. However, no-one made the link between participation (however defined) and the achievement of 'better' rewilding decisions or outcomes. Some of the complexity in working with communities was summed up well by one interviewee: "*so, the community idea is great, and I mean don't get me wrong I spend all my time dealing with this … I'm all for the community thing but what is the*

community and when is it ever actually representative? The community council[1] *isn't even representative. There are all sorts of democratic things there. I think the process is absolutely right and fundamentally in my heart I think it's right but actually the reality of doing it is pretty hard work"* (SI#3 Conservation NGO). Moving beyond the specifics of community participation, broader exploration of rewilding governance within our material revealed two more pervasive aspects which are discussed below.

5.2. Wider public engagement

In contrast to community participation was the notion of public engagement which was much broader and vaguer. Within rewilding, across almost all of those spoken to throughout the research process, "*taking or bringing people with you*" (GI#2 Conservation NGO) was perceived as essential: "*the underlying theme is 'engage people in everything we do'"* (OI#3 Conservation NGO). Whilst important to those managing the process, the types of engagement discussed represented low-level participation and empowerment. Engagement was largely envisaged and enacted through rewilding proponents advocating for a rewilding approach and trying to convince others of its merits in various ways. In one case, this was a response to an expressed need for greater transparency about how decisions had been made and, *"helping people understand where this has come from"* (GI#10 Rewilding project).

There was a strong emphasis on persuading the public that rewilding was a good idea, which included outlining the benefits of rewilding. This was often seen as being about 'connecting' people or 'inspiring' them to support rewilding and become engaged by getting involved in rewilding activities, but fundamentally it was about increasing the acceptability of rewilding: *"I think the drive for more public engagement and community engagement is about helping fostering understanding of what's going on … so you have that community buy-in and understanding, rather than things being done to you."* (GI#10 Rewilding project). One interviewee made a distinction about the audience being targeted, arguing that most of the current discussion was between those already invested in rewilding: "*let's connect with the people that don't know what you and I are talking about at the moment because that's the important part, right?"* (GI#11 Private estate).

The terms 'consultation' and 'involvement' were used interchangeably with engagement, although the former tended to be referenced within the context of more formal feedback mechanisms e.g., public consultation through the planning process. For some, there was an important educational component to engagement, addressing a perceived deficit in the public understanding of rewilding, and seen by some as a necessary precursor to greater participation. Developing a shared understanding to allow informed discussion was considered as extremely important for governance in general but also for specific aspects of rewilding e.g., reintroductions: *"perhaps we need to spend time explaining what we mean by ecological function, why that's really important and then one day, then we can have a proper conversation about lynx or wolf"* (OI#1 Conservation NGO). This was closely related to concerns expressed in the previous section about whether communities had sufficient overall environmental expertise to be able to participate in rewilding decisions.

5.3. A move to partnership

Multiple interviewees talked about collaboration and described existing or developing partnership rewilding projects. However, in contrast to public engagement, partnership and collaboration were features of rewilding governance only pursued in quite specific circumstances. Fundamentally, partnership was about seeking a coalition between landowners (organisations or individuals), primarily those already supportive of pursuing a rewilding approach. This was both explicitly and implicitly stated as the focus of partnership or collaborative efforts, as it concentrated resources on those with decision-making power and control over land use. Partnership was seen as a route to achieve change and improvements at a scale appropriate for the ecological function and natural processes central to rewilding's aims. For one interviewee the realisation that *"we could achieve more together"* (OI#3 Conservation NGO), which had both been facilitated by, and resulted in the pursuit of more partnership working, had been one of the biggest changes in organisational approach during their career. For those representing public bodies, partnership was seen as particularly important in allowing the organisations to extend their impact against a backdrop of constrained public finances. Several interviewees acknowledged that a well-resourced, large land-owning partner was incredibly useful in giving a project the means (and often power and impetus) to enact land use change quickly and effectively.

However, it was acknowledged that partnership working could be difficult, even when aligned under an overall rewilding vision, due to the need to incorporate or balance more objectives for a piece of land. Several interviewees conceded that when there are multiple interests involved, governance was likely to be more complicated whilst simultaneously more important: *"so the governance structure* [of the project] *becomes key, but I think what's more fundamental is the extent to which the project can accommodate diversity"* (GI#6 Conservation NGO/Rewilding project B). Interviewees described how the governance of rewilding partnerships was largely in its infancy. Partnerships were generally led by an instigating organisation responsible for establishing the structure and functioning of the governance of the partnership. Across all those interviewed, this was somewhat experimental: *"it's just a long game of persuasion and a long game of using various mechanisms"* (GI#2 Public body/Rewilding Project A).

Most projects had sought partnerships with a small number of 'like-minded' organisations and individuals to help make decision-making more straight-forward. However, one rewilding project was in the early stages of establishment and sought a partnership across multiple and varied landowners, not necessarily all initially signed up to a rewilding approach. For this project, a governance model which could accommodate different interests, values, and views, was considered particularly important and was taking time to establish. For all projects though, there was a constant pull between the shared rewilding endeavour and the need to respect and guarantee autonomy for partners: *"I'll be in your partnership but … ' I said, 'We're not asking anybody to give up control.' And he says, 'Well, I'm not giving up any control.' So, it's a deal-breaker anyway. So, we need to respect that and count on the fact that we hope that we can demonstrate why this is in your interests."* (OI#6 Conservation NGO/Rewilding Project B). In response, interviewees talked of the idea of 'flex' within a partnership – allowing autonomy combined with working towards shared interests and crucially benefits – and described a form of collaboration by which partners were not constrained to progress other things in their own right: *"discussions can be quite robust. But we've always got the let-out clause within the principles that if it's something we decide not to do in partnership, we're not going to stop an individual partner progressing something themselves"* (GI#2 Public body/Rewilding project A). By contrast, one interviewee conceded that partnership often meant working to "*the lowest common denominator"* (GI#10 Rewilding project A). Despite the difficulties, those interviewees engaged in (or developing) rewilding partnerships described a process of 'working with', a phrase in clear contrast to the 'taking or bringing with' used when discussing community participation or public engagement.

Many of the concerns discussed with respect to wider participation in rewilding governance e.g., the lack of an existing governance structure, how to mediate multiple interests and diverse views, capacity and resources, adequate prioritisation of the environmental interest, and 'ground rules' for informed debate, were common to discussions about

[1] A community council is the most local tier of elected representation in Scotland. It is a voluntary organization run by residents to advise and advocate on behalf of the local community, set up and overseen by a local government authority.

both community participation and landowner partnerships. However, whilst these concerns limited or bounded the former, they were seen as barriers to be overcome in the latter. In the next sections, we expand on these concerns and consider some of the challenges to more participatory approaches to rewilding governance which emerged from our research.

5.4. Conservation imperative vs. democratic imperative

The data indicated a clear tension between a need for action to address biodiversity loss and the climate crisis which rewilding was widely perceived as a potential solution to, versus the value of greater representation, in particular the participation of communities and the public in rewilding decisions. The existence of such a strong and prioritised 'conservation imperative' underpinning rewilding efforts was unsurprising, as was a desire amongst proponents to direct their efforts into facilitating participation contingent on support for rewilding. However, this presented significant challenges for more participatory or deliberative governance, an issue several interviewees reflected on: "*there's a complete tension here between democracy and conservation imperative … I don't know how you fix that … because I think some things are desperately in need of change - 'make it happen' rather than 'let's have a decade-long chat about it.'*" (GI#1 Public body). As well as the concern that participation could result in being mired in endless discussion, potentially with those who may not understand or appreciate the issues, there was the recognised challenge of achieving consensus across varied interests: *"I think it is harder to do rewilding the more people are involved, because you have lots of other ideas for other things you could be doing with that land"* (GI#5 Conservation NGO). Despite many rewilding proponents perceiving wider participation and community empowerment in rewilding as desirable, practicalities and a sense of urgency created pressure against these more complicated and time-consuming practices. In addition, many of the interviewees expressed a strong personal desire to make an impact in their lifetime, with several having moved from jobs in the wider conservation sector to organisations specifically dedicated to rewilding or restoration. They expressed frustration at existing regimes such as designations, and the lack of progress achieved despite decades of conservation effort. This context framed efforts being directed towards partnerships with those who were existing supporters of rewilding, but who were also crucially already empowered as landowners and thereby able to enact the land use change considered essential to rewilding: "*we've got to start thinking big, start thinking about big chunks of land, big chunks of habitat, big areas of restoration really, to really make that big difference*" (GI#2 Conservation NGO).

5.5. Landownership, power, and control

Across our material, land ownership was identified as central to land use governance, which presented both an opportunity for rewilding ambitions and a challenge to widening participation in rewilding governance. A key reason to pursue land ownership acknowledged by interviewees was control and decision-making power: *"in the years with* [conservation organisation]*, a lot of my job was buying land, now why did we buy land? So, we had the power to determine what happened on that land"* (GI#1 Public body), and land ownership was a key factor in *a move to partnership* (*Section 5.3*). Increasing the participation of the public or communities in decision-making however, had the potential to fundamentally clash with one of the key rationales for why individuals and organisations bought land, namely autonomy, particularly in decision-making. Several interviewees argued strongly that it was not ownership *per se*, it was use that mattered. This appeared to be more of an aspiration or perhaps an attempt to maintain neutrality in what was seen as the politically sensitive land ownership debate. Discussions implied that practically, to achieve rewilding within the current system, the favoured approach was to work with (often a small number of) like-minded landowners who could come together, decide on a course of action, and relatively quickly implement it, and then try and persuade the public or local community to support that approach. Consideration of communities as potential partners primarily arose in response to the possibility of them too becoming landowners. The tension between private property rights and more participatory land use decision-making also related to questions about benefit and interest, and this is explored in our final theme below.

5.6. The public interest in rewilding

Interviewees talked about the benefits of rewilding, as a 'public good', with some explicitly discussing the concept of the 'public interest' with regards to land and how it was used. For most proponents, rewilding was the 'right thing' and therefore was either explicitly or implicitly providing the public interest. This corresponded to a notion that NGOs specifically operated with a degree of legitimacy as membership organisations, and moral authority as charities: "*we know that this* [the project] *has been set up for all the right reasons"* (GI#2 Conservation NGO). At the same time, public interest was equated by several respondents with the national interest, and as discussed previously, there were therefore concerns about how to balance that with local interests: *"if too much of the decision-making is purely perceived from a local perspective, then the national bit gets lost"* (GI#1 Public body). NGOs were particularly concerned about whether greater community participation would give too much weight to local community interests, which it was considered could be at the expense of a wider national public interest in the environment represented by an approach such as rewilding.

6. Discussion

Within Scotland, current government policy places considerable emphasis on large-scale land use transitions to address the climate and biodiversity crises (Scottish Government, 2021b). Thus far, however, there is no national strategic approach to taking forward large-scale rewilding, and no integrated governance framework for rewilding. Our findings suggest that this results in rewilding proponents deciding how to fill this space and doing so in varied and developing ways, with many cognizant that their approach is experimental. Rewilding governance arrangements, including approaches to participation, are almost exclusively steered by those who own land and are seeking to pursue a rewilding agenda. Barriers to meaningful participation relate to an underlying context which includes concentration of land ownership and weak local governance structures. The wider landscape of Scottish land use governance is however evolving. Land reform requirements, such as the move towards demonstrating the public interest in ownership and use, and the push for greater community empowerment (including land ownership) plus collaboration and engagement in decision-making all have implications for these arrangements. Additionally, in part connected to land reform, there is the potential for an increase in demand from communities themselves and the wider public for a greater say in decisions about how land in Scotland is used and managed. However, despite strong rhetoric and aspiration, democratising environmental governance is far from straightforward. Based on our analysis it appeared that, seen from the perspective of rewilding actors, participation was chiefly about convincing the public and communities to support pre-determined choices, not about including them to debate or influence these choices. This foundation, conceptually and practically, fundamentally bounded the nature, and limited the value of that participation.

6.1. Implications for rewilding governance

As also noted by Thomas (2022), we found that rewilding proponents were working within an existing cultural, economic and political system which was influencing approaches to rewilding and therefore its governance. For some of those we spoke to, in a time of urgent ecological

and environmental crisis (Ceballos et al., 2015; Pörtner et al., 2022), questions about how rewilding decisions were being made, and by whom, were simply of lesser importance than the conservation imperative to rewild. Our data indicated a strong sense of paternalism and stewardship over land being rewilded. Participatory processes can be slow, difficult, complex, time consuming, and the outcomes uncertain (Bishop and Davis, 2002; Eastwood et al., 2017). Perhaps fundamentally, as Davies, (2001) observed, *"there are no guarantees that procedural democracy will produce substantive environmental benefits if there are competing views of what the environment should be like and what it is valuable for"* (p80). Community participation in decision-making, community benefit, as well as public interest in land also sit uneasily with current property rights and common drivers for private land ownership, specifically unilateral control - arrangements which can benefit certain rewilding ambitions.

Despite this, our findings, specifically discussions around our *ladder of participation*, indicated an appetite within many rewilding projects (for varied reasons and with varying degrees of success), to engage with participatory processes. For this to be more effective, we suggest this requires a more nuanced approach to participation, with rewilding proponents reflecting on, and potentially adapting their expectations of the process. This would incorporate trying to deal with divergent views (potentially including fundamental debates about land and what it is for) in a constructive way. As others have noted, key is identifying the expectations underpinning the use of a participatory approach (Wesselink et al., 2011), which should in turn inform the practical details of the participatory process (Richards et al., 2004).

Our study highlighted the rationales for participation were strongly moral, e.g., 'it's a good thing to do', or instrumental, e.g., 'it will improve acceptability', but these provided little guidance as to what participatory practice should comprise. Here, research on pluralism and agonism may offer some insights. Hallgren et al. (2018) propose that disagreement be actively embraced in dialogues aiming to address conflict in natural resource management. This connects to the idea that the value of participation in conservation comes when all of those who may hold relevant, including differing views, can be involved (Pascual et al., 2021). Actively embracing pluralism and agonism can help avoid the loss of participatory value which results from strong normative drives such as the desire for consensus and the avoidance of disagreement: if participation is contingent on thinking similarly, this can stifle creativity, particularly when seeking potential solutions to conflicts (Hallgren et al., 2018). It is also unrealistic to expect everyone to hold the same views but as such, this often results in selective participation, an aspect we can see clearly within some current rewilding initiatives. For this kind of participation to work, inclusivity and acknowledging that understandings of nature are based on diverse knowledge and value systems is important (Pascual et al., 2021), as is ensuring empowerment within a governance context such that all participants can affect e.g., influence, enact change, and benefit from, decisions proportional to need (Ostrom, 1990; Ostrom et al., 1994). Without this, participation at best risks being tokenistic (Arnstein, 1969; Evans, 2012), but at worst may result in stifling debate, e.g., through 'discursive closure', leaving disagreements unarticulated (and therefore unexplored) (Hallgren et al., 2018), with the potential to sustain or generate new problems or greater conflict.

For an approach such as rewilding with its ecological complexity including novelty and experimentation (Wynne-Jones et al., 2020), alongside its potentially increasing influence on land use and therefore multiple interests; having forums *"where disagreement is expressed and developed"* (Hallgren et al., 2018: p1) may be a necessary element as well as a more effective way to take participation and governance forward. Clearly, the practicalities of achieving empowered participation, which respects diverse and divergent views is not without its challenges (Eastwood et al., 2017) and if the rewilding movement continues to develop aspirations to be more participatory then this may necessitate ecological compromise.

Rewilding is also part of a wider conversation about land use, which in Scotland includes a shift towards the development and utilisation of the concept of the public interest. In the cases discussed in our study, due to the nature of concentrated land ownership, private actors were taking an increasing role in the delivery of the public goods emerging from rewilding. This reflects aspects of neoliberalism identified by others effecting rural land use across the UK (Adams et al., 2014; Wynne-Jones and Vetter, 2018). Private interests, private philanthropy, and private land ownership are not necessarily incompatible with delivering certain conservation and rewilding aims (e.g., Knepp Wildland, Wildland Ltd, Alladale Wilderness Reserve). They can however have implications for more equitable and representative governance (Gooden and 't Sas-Rolfes, 2020); and as Kamal et al. (2015) identified, delivering conservation on private land can make ensuring long-term security and protection for those aims precarious, based as they are on the power and opportunities afforded to the owner and ultimately on their personal attitude, values, and motivations.

There are concerns that current policy shifts which provide opportunities for rewilding without addressing governance challenges are at risk of exacerbating inequalities, for example, through public payments for environmental land management and income from natural capital markets being concentrated within a small pool of large private landowners (Hollingdale, 2022; McMorran et al., 2022). Whilst rewilding can be considered to represent an ecologically pioneering approach to land use for conservation (e.g., Monbiot, 2013), in Scotland this has not commonly been matched in relation to the underlying participation and empowerment of local communities and wider stakeholders in rewilding initiatives. Rewilding is a dynamic and developing arena and there are exceptions where communities are more embedded in the process and have initiated rewilding projects themselves e.g., Loch Arkaig Community Forest, and the Langholm Initiative Tarras Valley Nature Reserve. However, primarily partnering with those who own land means many rewilding endeavours risk benefitting from, and thereby reinforcing, some of the same thinking and structures which are associated with established underlying inequalities and environmental conflicts. This can be seen in recent criticism of 'green lairds' and related concerns around potential 'green grabbing'; a process of large scale private and/or corporate acquisitions of land (in Scotland and internationally) with the underlying aim of investing in what are essentially public goods (e.g., carbon and biodiversity), that attract ever greater public funding, but which are kept beyond the reach of communities, and are owned, managed, distributed, and controlled privately (e.g., Davidson, 2022; Garavelli, 2022).

7. Conclusion

In this paper, we provide insight into governance shifts which are seeing the evolution of more participatory processes in rewilding, through degrees of public and community engagement and landowner partnerships. Participation in rewilding is, however, variable, selective, and conditional, and we argue that its value in governance and steering decision-making, in its current form, is therefore diluted. Rewilding is by no means the only land use encountering governance challenges and essentially represents a microcosm of wider land use challenges in Scotland and further afield. Developments in concepts such as community empowerment, natural capital, or the public interest have implications for the management of land globally, and we believe rewilding in Scotland reflects some generic difficulties around specifying and implementing genuinely empowered participation. If the net-zero drive propelling land purchases and large-scale carbon off-setting by landowners continues, land use changes prioritising these new interests may be implemented over significant geographical areas affecting numerous communities and publics. Whilst not all carbon off-setting can be attributed to, or associated with, 'rewilding', the support for native habitat restoration which underpins much off-setting activity provides clear opportunities for expanding rewilding ambitions. Rewilding is now

operating in an increasingly congested space where the lines between nature-led ecologically centred rewilding projects, and enterprises which share attributes (e.g., native habitat restoration) but have very different primary motivations (e.g., a return on investment), are progressively blurred in discourse and practice. The 'governance between the cracks' and its implications for participatory process we have identified in rewilding raise questions around democratic process which are applicable to wider land use decision-making contexts. Whilst others involved in land use change in Scotland are likely to have their own governance imperatives, it remains to be seen whether rewilding can build on its 'taming' and the promise of embracing people (Martin et al., 2021), to facilitate not just ecological change but also social, economic, and cultural change through the inclusion and empowerment of rural communities in Scotland with all their potentially diverse views.

Competing interests statement

Work produced as part of a PhD funded by a Carnegie Trusts for Scotland scholarship. The Carnegie Trust was not involved in study design; in the collection, analysis, or interpretation of data; in the writing of the report; or in the decision to submit the article for publication.

Author statement

Alison Martin: Conceptualization (lead), Methodology (lead), Investigations, Analysis, Writing (original draft), Funding acquisition. Anke Fischer: Conceptualization (supervision), Methodology (supervision), Writing (review & editing). Rob McMorran: Conceptualization (supervision), Methodology (supervision), Writing (review).

Data statement

The original interview data and associated transcriptions gathered as part of this research are confidential and cannot be released in their raw form. It may however be possible to discuss aspects of the research not detailed in this paper to help promote transparency without compromising participant confidentiality and anonymity. Please direct any enquiries about the data on which this paper is based to the lead author.

Declaration of competing interest

None.

Data availability

The data that has been used is confidential.

Acknowledgement

Thanks go to all those who participated in the research, specifically the interviewees without whose time and patience this nature of research would be impossible.

Appendix

Table 1
Interview topic guide and sample questions.

Topics	Sample Questions
1. Practice of Rewilding - Governance	•Do you have a written protocol/formal approach to rewilding decision-making? •Have you developed any new external working relationships for rewilding? •Do you think the governance structure for rewilding is working within the organisation/project? •How do you deal with differences of opinion and interests? •How important is land ownership in rewilding governance and decision-making?
2. Practice of Rewilding - People and Communities	•What nature of interaction would you like to see between local communities/public and rewilding? •Do you have experience of working with communities on rewilding? •How do you deal with disagreement/different perspectives with the local community?

Notes: These are sample questions from a second round of interviews which build on findings generated in a first round of interviews (see Martin et al., 2021), part of a wider research project investigating the discourse and practice of rewilding within Scotland.

References

Adams, W.M., Hodge, I.D., Sandbrook, L., 2014. New spaces for nature: the re-territorialisation of biodiversity conservation under neoliberalism in the UK. Trans. Inst. Br. Geogr. https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12050.

Apostolopoulou, E., Chatzimentor, A., Maestre-Andrés, S., Requena-i-Mora, M., Pizarro, A., Bormpoudakis, D., 2021. Reviewing 15 years of research on neoliberal conservation: towards a decolonial, interdisciplinary, intersectional and community-engaged research agenda. Geoforum 124, 236–256. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2021.05.006.

Arnstein, S.R., 1969. A ladder of citizen participation. J. Am. Plann. Assoc. 35, 216–224. https://doi.org/10.1080/01944366908977225.

Arts, K., Fischer, A., van der Wal, R., 2012. Common stories of reintroduction: a discourse analysis of documents supporting animal reintroductions to Scotland. Land Use Pol. 29, 911–920. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2012.01.009.

Arts, K., Fischer, A., van der Wal, R., 2014. Political decision making, governance shifts and Scottish animal reintroductions: are democratic principles at stake? J. Environ. Plann. Manag. 57, 612–628. https://doi.org/10.1080/09640568.2012.758627.

Auster, R.E., Barr, S.W., Brazier, R.E., 2021. Improving engagement in managing reintroduction conflicts: learning from beaver reintroduction. J. Environ. Plann. Manag. 64, 1713–1734. https://doi.org/10.1080/09640568.2020.1837089.

Bäckstrand, K., Kahn, J., Kronsell, A., Lövbrand, E., 2010. Environmental Politics and Deliberative Democracy: Examining the Promise of New Modes of Governance. Monograph Books. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781849806411.

Benjaminsen, T.A., Svarstad, H., 2010. The death of an elephant: conservation discourses versus practices in Africa. Forum Dev. Stud. 37, 385–408. https://doi.org/10.1080/08039410.2010.516406.

Bishop, P., Davis, G., 2002. Mapping public participation in policy choices. Aust. J. Publ. Adm. 61, 14–29. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8500.00255.

Boyd, E., 2008. Navigating Amazonia under uncertainty: past, present and future environmental governance. Philos. Trans. R. Soc. B Biol. Sci. 363, 1911–1916. https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2007.0023.

Braun, V., Clarke, V., 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology. Qual. Res. Psychol. 3, 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa.

Brown, C., McMorran, R., Price, M.F., 2012. Rewilding – a new paradigm for nature conservation in Scotland? Scot. Geogr. J. 127, 288–314. https://doi.org/10.1080/14702541.2012.666261.

Bryce, R., Combe, M., Hutchison, N.E., Price, M.F., Schulz, L., Valero, D., 2018. Research in Interventions to Manage Land Markets and Limit the Concentration of Land Ownership Elsewhere in the World.

Bulkeley, H., Mol, A.P.J. (Eds.), 2003a. Environment, Policy and Participation [Special Issue]. Environmental Values.

Bulkeley, H., Mol, A.P.J., 2003b. Participation and environmental governance: consensus, ambivalence and debate. Environ. Val. 12, 143–154. https://doi.org/10.3197/096327103129341261.

Carver, S., 2016. Rewilding... conservation and conflict. Ecos 37, 2–10. https://doi.org/10.1063/1.2957037.

Carver, S., Comber, A., McMorran, R., Nutter, S., 2012. A GIS model for mapping spatial patterns and distribution of wild land in Scotland. Landsc. Urban Plann. 104, 395–409. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2011.11.016.

Carver, S., Convery, I., Hawkins, S., Beyers, R., Eagle, A., Kun, Z., Van Maanen, E., Cao, Y., Fisher, M., Edwards, S.R., Nelson, C., Gann, G.D., Shurter, S., Aguilar, K., Andrade, A., Ripple, W.J., Davis, J., Sinclair, A., Bekoff, M., Noss, R., Foreman, D., Pettersson, H., Root-Bernstein, M., Svenning, J.C., Taylor, P., Wynne-Jones, S., Featherstone, A.W., Fløjgaard, C., Stanley-Price, M., Navarro, L.M., Aykroyd, T., Parfitt, A., Soulé, M., 2021. Guiding principles for rewilding. Conserv. Biol. 1–12 https://doi.org/10.1111/cobi.13730.

Cass, N., 2006. Participatory-Deliberative Engagement : a literature review. Renew. Energy 1–49.

Castree, N., 2008. Neoliberalising nature: the logics of deregulation and reregulation. Environ. Plann. 40, 131–152. https://doi.org/10.1068/a3999.

Ceballos, G., Ehrlich, P.R., Barnosky, A.D., García, A., Pringle, R.M., Palmer, T.M., 2015. Accelerated modern human-induced species losses: entering the sixth mass extinction. Sci. Adv. 1, 9–13. https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.1400253.

Chaudhuri, A., 2016. Understanding empowerment. J. Dev. Policy Pract. 1, 121–141. https://doi.org/10.1177/2455133315612298.

Commission on Global Governance, 1995. Our Global Neighbourhood. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Community Land Scotland, 2017. Position Paper on 'rewilding'.

Community Land Scotland, 2021. Land Reform for a Sustainable Scotland [online]. Available at https://www.communitylandscotland.org.uk/resources/briefing-land-reform-for-a-sustainable-scotland/. (Accessed 23 November 2021).

Corlett, R.T., 2016a. Restoration, reintroduction, and rewilding in a changing world. Trends Ecol. Evol. 31, 453–462. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tree.2016.02.017.

Corlett, R.T., 2016b. The role of rewilding in landscape design for conservation. Curr. Landsc. Ecol. Reports 1, 127–133. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40823-016-0014-9.

Coz, D.M., Young, J.C., 2020. Conflicts over wildlife conservation: learning from the reintroduction of beavers in Scotland. People Nat 2, 406–419. https://doi.org/10.1002/pan3.10076.

Davidson, M., 2022. Land, Green Lairds and Rewilding (20 February 2022) [online]. Available at https://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2022/02/20/land-green-lairds-and-rewilding/. (Accessed 26 April 2022).

Davies, A., 2001. What silence knows - planning, public participation and environmental values. Environmental Values 10, 77–102.

Davies, E., Kmietowicz, E., Millar, R., Scudo, A., Thillainathan, I., Stark, C., Thompson, M., 2020. Land use: policies for a net zero UK. Comm. Clim. Chang. 121.

Deary, H., Warren, C.R., 2017. Divergent visions of wildness and naturalness in a storied landscape: practices and discourses of rewilding in Scotland's wild places. J. Rural Stud. 54, 211–222. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2017.06.019.

Dinnie, E., Fischer, A., Huband, S., 2015. Discursive claims to knowledge: The challenge of delivering public policy objectives through new environmental governance arrangements. J. Rural Stud. 37, 1–9. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2014.11.008.

Drenthen, M., 2018a. Rewilding in cultural layered landscapes. Environ. Val. 27, 325–330. https://doi.org/10.3197/096327118X15251686827697.

Drenthen, M., 2018b. Rewilding in layered landscapes as a challenge to place identity. Environ. Val. 27, 405–425. https://doi.org/10.3197/096327118X15251686827732.

du Toit, J.T., Pettorelli, N., 2019. The differences between rewilding and restoring an ecologically degraded landscape. J. Appl. Ecol. 56, 2467–2471. https://doi.org/10.1111/1365-2664.13487.

Eastwood, A., Fischer, A., Byg, A., 2017. The challenges of participatory and systemic environmental management: from aspiration to implementation. J. Environ. Plann. Manag. 60, 1683–1701. https://doi.org/10.1080/09640568.2016.1249787.

Ehrlich, P.R., Pringle, R.M., 2008. Where does biodiversity go from here? A grim business-as-usual forecast and a hopeful portfolio of partial solutions. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U. S. A 105, 11579–11586. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0801911105.

European Parliament, 2008. Report on Wilderness in Europe (5 December 2008) [online]. Available at https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-6-2008-0478_EN.html. (Accessed 7 March 2022).

Evans, J.P., 2012. Environmental Governance. Routledge.

Gammon, A.R., 2018. The many meanings of rewilding: an introduction and the case for a broad conceptualisation. Environ. Val. 27, 331–350. https://doi.org/10.3197/096327118X15251686827705.

Garavelli, D., 2022. Insight: Scotland's great Net Zero land grab (17 April 2022) [online]. Available at https://www.scotsman.com/news/environment/insight-scotlands-great-net-zero-land-grab-3657133 (Accessed 26 April 2021).

Genes, L., Svenning, J.C., Pires, A.S., Fernandez, F.A.S., 2019. Why we should let rewilding be wild and biodiverse. Biodivers. Conserv. 28, 1285–1289. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10531-019-01707-w.

Glenn, S., MacKessack-Leitch, J., Pollard, K., Glass, J., McMorran, R., 2019. Investigation into the Issues Associated with Large Scale and Concentrated Landownership in Scotland. Commissioned Report, the Scottish Land Comission, 20 March 2019.

Global Rewilding Alliance, 2021. 1st World Rewilding Day on the 20th of March 2021 – the sun Equinox (20th March 2021) [online]. Available at https://www.decadeonrestoration.org/stories/1st-world-rewilding-day-20th-march-2021-sun-equinox-0 (Accessed 26 April 2021).

Gooden, J., 't Sas-Rolfes, M., 2020. A review of critical perspectives on private land conservation in academic literature. Ambio 49, 1019–1034. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13280-019-01258-y.

Hallgren, L., Bergeå, H., Westberg, L., 2018. Communication problems when participants disagree (or avoid disagreeing) in. Dialogues in Swedish Natural Resource Management — Challenges to Agonism in Practice 3, 1–11. https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2018.00056.

Hayward, M.W., Scanlon, R.J., Callen, A., Howell, L.G., Klop-Toker, K.L., Di Blanco, Y., Balkenhol, N., Bugir, C.K., Campbell, L., Caravaggi, A., Chalmers, A.C., Clulow, J., Clulow, S., Cross, P., Gould, J.A., Griffin, A.S., Heurich, M., Howe, B.K., Jachowski, D.S., Jhala, Y.V., Krishnamurthy, R., Kowalczyk, R., Lenga, D.J., Linnell, J.D.C., Marnewick, K.A., Moehrenschlager, A., Montgomery, R.A., Osipova, L., Peneaux, C., Rodger, J.C., Sales, L.P., Seeto, R.G.Y., Shuttleworth, C.M., Somers, M.J., Tamessar, C.T., Upton, R.M.O., Weise, F.J., 2019. Reintroducing rewilding to restoration – rejecting the search for novelty. Biol. Conserv. 233, 255–259. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2019.03.011.

Hodge, I.D., Adams, W.M., 2012. Neoliberalisation, rural land trusts and institutional blending. Geoforum 43, 472–482. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2011.11.007.

Hollingdale, J., 2022. Green Finance, Land Reform and a Just Transition to Net Zero.

Holmes, G., Marriott, K., Briggs, C., Wynne-Jones, S., 2020. What is rewilding, how should it be done, and why? A Q-method study of the views held by European rewilding advocates. Conserv. Soc. 18, 77–88. https://doi.org/10.4103/cs.cs_19_14.

Jørgensen, D., 2015. Rethinking Rewilding. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2014.11.016.

Kamal, S., Grodzińska-Jurczak, M., Brown, G., 2015. Conservation on private land: a review of global strategies with a proposed classification system. J. Environ. Plann. Manag. 58, 576–597. https://doi.org/10.1080/09640568.2013.875463.

Klop-Toker, K., Clulow, S., Shuttleworth, C., Hayward, M.W., 2020. Are novel ecosystems the only novelty of rewilding? Restor. Ecol. 28, 1318–1320. https://doi.org/10.1111/rec.13241.

Lemos, M.C., Agrawal, A., 2006. Environmental governance. Annu. Rev. Environ. Resour. 31, 297–325. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.energy.31.042605.135621.

Lorenzen, A., 2020. Rewilding projects are sprouting up across the UK (05 August 2020) [online]. Available at https://agreenerlifeagreenerworld.net/2020/08/05/rewilding-projects-are-sprouting-up-across-the-uk/. (Accessed 9 March 2022).

Lorimer, J., Sandom, C., Jepson, P., Doughty, C.E., Barua, M., Kirby, K., 2015. Rewilding: Science, Practice, and Politics. SSRN. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-environ-102014-021406.

MacLeod, G., Goodwin, M., 1999. Space, scale and state strategy: rethinking urban and regional governance. Prog. Hum. Geogr. 23, 503–527. https://doi.org/10.1191/030913299669861026.

Martin, A., Fischer, A., Mcmorran, R., Smith, M., 2021. Land Use Policy Taming rewilding - from the ecological to the social : how rewilding discourse in Scotland has come to include people. Land Use Pol. 111, 105677 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2021.105677.

McMorran, R., Reed, M., Glass, J., Rudman, H., Peskett, L., McKee, A., Williams, A., Macaulay, B., Bauer, A., Trench, H., Glendinning, J., 2022. A review of key risks, trade-offs, and opportunities associated with large-scale land acquisition for carbon in the UK. Draft Report. SEFARI and SRUC.

Mol, A.P.J., Carter, N.T., 2006. China's environmental governance in transition. Environ. Polit. 15, 149–170. https://doi.org/10.1080/09644010600562765.

Monbiot, G., 2013. Feral: Searching for Enchantment on the Frontiers of Rewilding. Penguin.

NatureScot, 2015. Scotland's National Peatland Plan: Working for our future [online]. Available at https://www.nature.scot/doc/scotlands-national-peatland-plan-working-our-future. (Accessed 10 March 2022).

Navarro, L.M., Pereira, H.M., 2015. Rewilding abandoned landscapes in Europe. Rewilding Eur. Landscapes 3–23. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-12039-3_1.

Newell, P., Pattberg, P., Schroeder, H., 2012. Multiactor governance and the environment. Annu. Rev. Environ. Resour. 37, 365–387. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-environ-020911-094659.

Ostrom, E., 1990. Governing the Commons: the Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Ostrom, E., Gardner, R., Walker, J., 1994. Rules, Games, and Common Pool Resources. University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor.

Page, N., Czuba, C.E., 1999. Empowerment: what is it? J. Ext. 37.

Pascual, U., Adams, W., Diaz, S., Lele, S., Mace, G.M., Turnhout, E., 2021. Pascual et al (2021) Biodiversity and the challenge of pluralism.pdf. Nat. Sustain. 4, 567–572. https://doi.org/10.17863/CAM.65646.

Perino, A., Pereira, H.M., Navarro, L.M., Fernández, N., Bullock, J.M., Ceauşu, S., Cortés-Avizanda, A., Van Klink, R., Kuemmerle, T., Lomba, A., Pe'er, G., Plieninger, T., Benayas, J.M.R., Sandom, C.J., Svenning, J.C., Wheeler, H.C., 2019. Rewilding complex ecosystems. Science 80, 364. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aav5570.

Pettorelli, N., Barlow, J., Stephens, P.A., Durant, S.M., Connor, B., , Schulte to Bühne, H., Sandom, C.J., Wentworth, J., du Toit, J.T., 2018. Making rewilding fit for policy. J. Appl. Ecol. 55, 1114–1125. https://doi.org/10.1111/1365-2664.13082.

Pettorelli, N., Durant, S.M., du Toit, J.T., 2019. Rewilding, Ecological. Cambridge University Press.

Pörtner, H.-O., Roberts, D.C., Adams, H., Adler, C., Aldunce, P., Ali, E., Begum, R.A., Betts, R., Zaiton Ibrahim, Z., 2022. Climate Change 2022 - Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability - Summary for Policymakers. IPPC Sixth Assessment Report.

Prior, J., Ward, K.J., 2016. Rethinking rewilding: a response to Jørgensen. Geoforum 69, 132–135. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2015.12.003.

Rewilding Britain, 2021. Find a Rewilding Project or Group [online]. Available at https://www.rewildingbritain.org.uk/rewilding-network#network-map. (Accessed 22 February 2021).

Richards, C., Blackstock, K.L., Carter, C.E., 2004. Practical approaches to participation. SERG Policy Br. No. 1, 23.

Root-Bernstein, M., Gooden, J., Boyes, A., 2018. Rewilding in practice: projects and policy. Geoforum. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2018.09.017.

Sandom, C.J., Dempsey, B., Bullock, D., Ely, A., Jepson, P., Jimenez-Wisler, S., Newton, A., Pettorelli, N., Senior, R.A., 2019. Rewilding in the English uplands: policy and practice. J. Appl. Ecol. 56, 266–273. https://doi.org/10.1111/1365-2664.13276.

Schulte to Bühne, H., Pettorelli, N., Hoffmann, M., 2021. The policy consequences of defining rewilding. Ambio. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13280-021-01560-8.
Scottish Government, 2017. Scottish Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement. The Scottish Government. September 2017. Published by.
Scottish Government, 2019. Grouse Moor Management Group report (19 December 2019) [online]. Available at https://www.gov.scot/publications/grouse-moor-management-group-report-scottish-government/. (Accessed 15 February 2021).
Scottish Government, 2020. Update to the Climate Change Plan 2018 – 2032: Securing a Green Recovery on a Path to Net Zero, vol. 255. Scottish Gov.
Scottish Government, 2021a. Community empowerment [online]. Available at https://www.gov.scot/policies/community-empowerment/empowering-communities-fund/ (Accessed 09 March 2022).
Scottish Government, 2021b. Land use - geting the best from our land strategy 2021 to 2026. Scotland's Third Land Use Strategy (24 March 2021) [online]. Available at https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-third-land-use-strategy-2021-2026-getting-best-land//. (Accessed 8 May 2021).
Scottish Land Commission, 2021a. Legislative proposals to address the impact of Scotland' s concentration of land ownership. A discussion paper from the Scottish Land Commission. 4 February 2021. Scottish Land Commission, Inverness.
Scottish Land Commission, 2021b. Community Engagement in Decisions Relating to Land. Protocol Series. December 2021 [online]. Available at https://www.landcommission.gov.scot/downloads/628e17641fd5d_Comm%20Engagement%20Protocol%202021.pdf.
Scottish Land Commission, 2021c. Land Connection 2021 - third annual land reform conference, 04 October - 06 October [online], 06 October.
Scottish Land Commission, 2022. Our Work [online]. Available at https://www.landcommission.gov.scot/. (Accessed 9 March 2022).
Scottish Law Society, 2022. Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement up for review, 10 November 2021 [online]. Available at https://www.lawscot.org.uk/news-and-events/legal-news/land-rights-and-responsibilities-statement-up-for-review/. (Accessed 9 March 2022).
Scottish Ecological Design Association (SEDA), 2021. A new vision for land use in Scotland: 6 conversations (01 March 2021) [online]. Available at https://www.seda.uk.net/land-conversations. (Accessed 9 March 2022).
Skogen, K., Mauz, I., Krange, O., 2008. Cry wolf!: narratives of wolf recovery in France and Norway. Rural. Sociol. 73, 105–133. https://doi.org/10.1526/003601108783575916.
Soulé, M.E., 1991. Conservation: tactics for a constant crisis. Science (80 253, 744–750. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.253.5021.744.
Soulé, M., Noss, R., 1998. Continental conservation. Wild Earth 18–28.
Svenning, Jens-Christian, Pederson, Pil B.M., Donlan, Josh, Ejrnæs, Rasmus, Faurby, Søren, Galetti, Mauro, Hansen, Dennis M., Sandel, Brody, Sandom, Christopher J., Terborgh, John W., Vera, F.W.M., 2016. Science for a wilder Anthropocene: synthesis and future directions for trophic rewilding research. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U. S. A 4, 898–906. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1502556112.
Taylor, P., 2011. Rewilding: ECOS Writing on Wildland and Conservation Values. The British Association of Nature Conservationists, Ethos.
The Scottish Government, 2017. Draft Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement.
The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1998. Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (The Aarhaus Convention).
Thomas, V., 2021. Domesticating rewilding: interpreting rewilding in england's green and pleasant land. Environ. Val. https://doi.org/10.3197/096327121X16328186623841.
Thomas, V., 2022. For whom the bell tolls: the uncounted extinctions and the (missed?) opportunities to prevent them. Environ. Hist. Camb. 28, 3–8. https://doi.org/10.3197/096734022X16384451127203.
Tipping, R., 1994. The form and fate of Scotland's woodlands. Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scotl. 124, 1–54.
UK Government House of Commons Hansard, 2019. Restoring Nature and Climate Change. Volume 667, 28 October 2019 [online]. Available at https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-10-28/debates/B12362DC-0F6A-481B-A1E6-973776F0F9F9/RestoringNatureAndClimateChange. (Accessed 15 February 2021).
Valluri-Nitsch, C., Metzger, M.J., McMorran, R., Price, M., 2018. My land? Your land? Scotland? - understanding sectoral similarities and differences in Scottish land use visions. Reg. Environ. Change 18, 803–816. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10113-018-1279-9.
Waylen, K.A., Fischer, A., McGowan, P.J.K., Thirgood, S.J., Milner-Gulland, E.J., 2010. The effect of local cultural context on community-based conservation interventions: evaluating ecological, economic, attitudinal and behavioural outcomes. Syst. Rev. - Collab. Environ. Evid. 44.
Wesselink, A., Paavola, J., Fritsch, O., Renn, O., 2011. Rationales for public participation in environmental policy and governance: practitioners' perspectives. Environ. Plann. 43, 2688–2704. https://doi.org/10.1068/a44161.
Wilson, C., 2013. Interview Techniques for UX Practitioners: A User-Centered Design Method. Morgan Kaufmann. https://doi.org/10.1016/C2012-0-06209-6.
World Wilderness Congress, 2020. Global Charter on rewilding [online]. https://wild11.org/charter/.
Wynne-Jones, S., Vetter, T., 2018. Assembling payments for ecosystem services in Wales: agri-environmental governance as an assemblage. In: Forney, J., Rosin, C., Campbell, H. (Eds.), Earthscan Food and Agriculture. Routledge, pp. 19–37.
Wynne-Jones, S., Strouts, G., Holmes, G., 2018. Abandoning or reimagining a cultural heartland? Understanding and responding to rewilding conflicts in Wales - the case of the cambrian wildwood. Environ. Val. 27, 337–403. https://doi.org/10.3197/096327118X15251686827723.
Wynne-Jones, S., Strouts, G., O'Neil, C., Sandom, C., 2020. Rewilding - departures in conservation policy and practice? An evaluation of developments in Britain. Conserv. Soc. 18, 89–102. https://doi.org/10.4103/cs.cs_19_32.