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Abstract: In recent work Ng assumes that it is good to engage in activities aimed at promoting ecosystem conservation. The only way Ng can derive this from the axiology he assumes (the view that wellbeing is the only intrinsically valuable or disvaluable thing) would be to assume that ecosystem conservation would benefit the individuals involved. This can be so as long as value prevails over disvalue in the target environments. Ng seems to assume this is indeed the case, but he does not explain why, and it is a claim that goes against the conclusions he has argued for previously (Ng 1995).
animals and the promotion of ecosystem conservation. It is for this reason that this is an important issue needing to be addressed.

Given what we have seen, it seems that the only way Ng can derive that we should engage in ecosystem conservation from the principles he assumes would be to assume that this would benefit the individuals involved. This can be so as long as value prevails over disvalue in the lives of sentient animals in our target environments. In this article Ng seems to assume that this is indeed the case. However, he does not explain why he makes this assumption as it runs against the conclusions he argued for in his 1995 paper. In that paper, he pointed out that the overwhelming majority of nonhuman animals die shortly after they come into existence due to the most widespread reproductive strategy in nature, which consists in bringing into existence a huge number of descendents. In fact, his paper has triggered extensive literature on this topic promoting this idea (Dorado 2015; Horta 2015; Paez 2015; Torres 2015; Faria 2016).

So, to summarize, ecosystem conservation can be argued for from Ng’s viewpoint if he has reasons to modify the claim he has argued for previously that disvalue is prevalent for sentient animals. In his last paper, Ng seems to assume that such reasons may exist, but does not explain why he believes this to be so.

References


