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"The Project Tiger Crisis in India: Moving Away from the Policy and Economics of Selectivity"

Damodaran, A.

Damodaran, A. "The Project Tiger Crisis in India: Moving Away from the Policy and Economics of Selectivity." *Environmental Values* 16, no. 1 (2007): 61–77. doi:10.3197/096327107780160328 .

This paper discusses the economic and philosophical inadequacies that have characterised the Project Tiger scheme in India. Launched in the 1970s to protect the habitats of the Royal Bengal Tiger, Project Tiger has over time evolved into a management system that has abstracted the tiger from its habitat by highlighting its charismatic functions. However the abstraction has also caused the tiger to be valued for its narrow consumptive uses. By comparison the habitats that have nurtured the tiger have received less attention. The paper critiques partial equilibrium frameworks that have attempted to value a tiger in terms of demand and supply functions rather than as an integral element of an ecosystem. While considering the superiority of the Total Economic Value concept as a value-determining method, the paper also points to the limitation of the concept in not addressing the conflicts between use and non-use values of a tiger. In the light of these facts, the paper advances the theory of complementarity as a valuation approach that considers the tiger and its habitat as a joint resource that needs to be protected and conserved in the larger interests of biodiversity conservation in India.
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