**Harnessing the potential of satellites to support conservation**

At ICCB 2015 in Montpellier this Tuesday, eminent biodiversity experts will call for conservation scientists to better collaborate with space agencies, such as NASA and the European Space Agency (ESA), to identify measures which help track biodiversity declines around the world. They believe that satellite data could play a huge role in supporting efforts to conserve wildlife worldwide, providing information directly relevant to policy makers and UN conventions, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity. Satellite images can indeed quickly reveal where and how to reverse the loss of biological diversity. Vegetation productivity or leaf cover can, for example, be measured across continents from space while providing information about biodiversity levels on the ground. Publicly-funded space agencies, including NASA and ESA, already collect and regularly provide open-access to satellite data. However, a lack of agreement between conservation biologists and space agencies on a definitive set of variables to track, as well as how to translate such information into useful data for conservation, has meant that so far this game-changing resource has remained untapped.

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