**To everyone**

On behalf of the authors, we want to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who has engaged thoughtfully with our recent article published in *Nature*. We greatly appreciate the diverse perspectives shared, as they underscore the complexity of this issue and the importance of ensuring that our work is both accurate and respectful.

In addressing the widely circulated statistic that 80% of the world’s biodiversity is found on Indigenous Peoples’ territories we would like to emphasise, as we have in our paper, that we did all we could not to undermine the role of Indigenous Peoples in biodiversity conservation. On the contrary, we acknowledge and deeply respect the critical contributions Indigenous communities make to global biodiversity maintenance, as we have clearly highlighted in our published research on Indigenous People’s Lands, since 2018 (e.g., Garnett et al. 2018 in *Nature Sustainability*; Fa et al. 2020 in *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*; Fernández-Llamazares et al. 2021 in the *Journal of Ethnobiology*). Their knowledge, practices, and governance systems are invaluable to the preservation of ecosystems and species worldwide.

As scientists and advocates, we believe that maintaining accuracy and integrity in our communications is crucial. Failing to correct errors, no matter how inconvenient, only serves to perpetuate disinformation, which is fundamentally at odds with the principles of scientific rigor. While the 80% statistic may sound compelling, it lacks the empirical support needed to stand up to scrutiny. Relying on such unverified figures can have unintended consequences, including fostering scepticism among policymakers, diminishing the credibility of environmental advocacy, and overshadowing the invaluable, culturally rooted perspectives that Indigenous Peoples contribute to biodiversity conservation.

We fully understand the concerns raised about the potential misuse of our findings to discredit Indigenous efforts. But we were also concerned that, sooner or later, someone much less sympathetic to the interests of Indigenous Peoples would attempt to debunk the 80% figure – something that, as many comments have pointed out, has already generated significant scepticism. In the wrong hands, exposing the deficiencies of this statistic could be used to dismiss all claims by Indigenous Peoples regarding biodiversity, potentially undermining their position in global discussions about the planet’s future.

Our approach was different. We sought to combine our analysis with multiple lines of evidence that highlight the crucial importance of Indigenous Peoples’ territories and knowledge systems to nature conservation. We recognise the need for sensitivity in communicating such information and our paper makes very clear from the beginning two key points:  1) the dangers of relying on unsupported claims in social advocacy and 2) the vital importance of valuing Indigenous Peoples’ cultures. The issue is not whether Indigenous Peoples’ territories harbour significant biodiversity—they undoubtedly do—but about ensuring that the statistics we use to highlight this stewardship are grounded in robust evidence. Transparency in this regard is crucial for maintaining trust and advancing meaningful conservation efforts that truly benefit Indigenous communities. Indeed, there are reasons to believe that the willingness of advocates for Indigenous Peoples to challenge such a favourable figure should increase the trust in the evidence that remains.

We believe that the recognition of Indigenous Peoples' fundamental role in supporting planetary sustainability will be stronger and more impactful when it is built on solid, verifiable evidence. We are glad that our approach has been appreciated by most of our correspondents since publication. One common sentiment has been relief that they no longer feel pressure to quote a figure in which they do not believe.

In response to concerns about the process of our research, we fully agree that Indigenous voices should be at the forefront of any work related to their lands and knowledge systems. That being said, claims that Indigenous Peoples were not involved in this study are false. Three Indigenous authors were involved in our paper, the three of them having an undisputable track record in standing up for the recognition of Indigenous Peoples’ rights. Of course, we recognise that more can always be done to ensure that research processes are inclusive and empowering for Indigenous Peoples. Looking ahead, we support and encourage the adoption of formal consultation processes, similar to those used in Aotearoa (New Zealand), to ensure that Indigenous communities are fully engaged in the research that concerns them, in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Lastly, we want to address the baseless and frankly absurd claim that our work is funded by the logging industry. This accusation is entirely false and deeply harmful. Our research is independent, driven by a commitment to scientific integrity and biodiversity conservation. We are deeply committed to preserving biodiversity and supporting the rights and roles of Indigenous Peoples in that mission. To suggest that our work is influenced by industry interests is not only untrue but also distracts from the real issues at hand. Our focus remains on advancing honest, evidence-based discussions that benefit the environment and the communities that depend on it.

Ultimately, our aim is to strengthen the credibility and effectiveness of biodiversity advocacy by ensuring that the information we share is precise and well-founded. We hope that this conversation will foster to more nuanced and respectful discourse that honours the vital role of Indigenous Peoples in conservation while also upholding the highest standards of scientific rigour.

We thank you again for your engagement, and we welcome continued dialogue on how we can collectively work toward these goals.