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Rejoinder to De Alessi

Michael Kremer*

CONTINUATION OF EXCHANGE BETWEEN MICHAEL DE ALESSI
AND MICHAEL KREMER FROM THE APRIL 2004 ISSUE OF *EJW*.

[De Alessi's Comment on Kremer and Morcom](#)
[Kremer's Response](#)
[De Alessi's Reply](#)

I WOULD JUST LIKE TO NOTE A FEW THINGS IN RESPONSE TO
De Alessi's reply.

First, he criticizes the paper as not saying anything about the real world. Our argument is that in the real world prices of storable goods like ivory are influenced by expectations of the future. De Alessi presents no evidence that this is incorrect, rather he simply asserts that the paper is not about the real world.

Second, he argues that loss of habitat is a greater threat to endangered species than is poaching. That is correct, but irrelevant. As we note in the paper, many species are also threatened by poaching. If one is trying to write a comprehensive book about endangered species then one should spend more time on the most important cause of endangerment than on the second or third most important cause. In a journal article, however, it is perfectly appropriate to write an article that seeks to add knowledge on what may be the second or third most important cause of endangerment. If one were to take De Alessi's argument further we should not write any

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articles about endangered species at all because endangered species might not even be the main environmental problem that our society is facing.

De Alessi argues that we are advocating devaluing species. That is incorrect. We are in favor of creating a situation in which species would be valued as long as they do not become extinct but the value of poached body parts would decline if the species became extinct. This would improve incentives.

Our assumption about open access is a positive assumption about the situation under which many elephants currently live. It is not a normative one. Factually, many elephants in Africa are not fully protected against poaching.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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