

Experts, Not Obstacles:

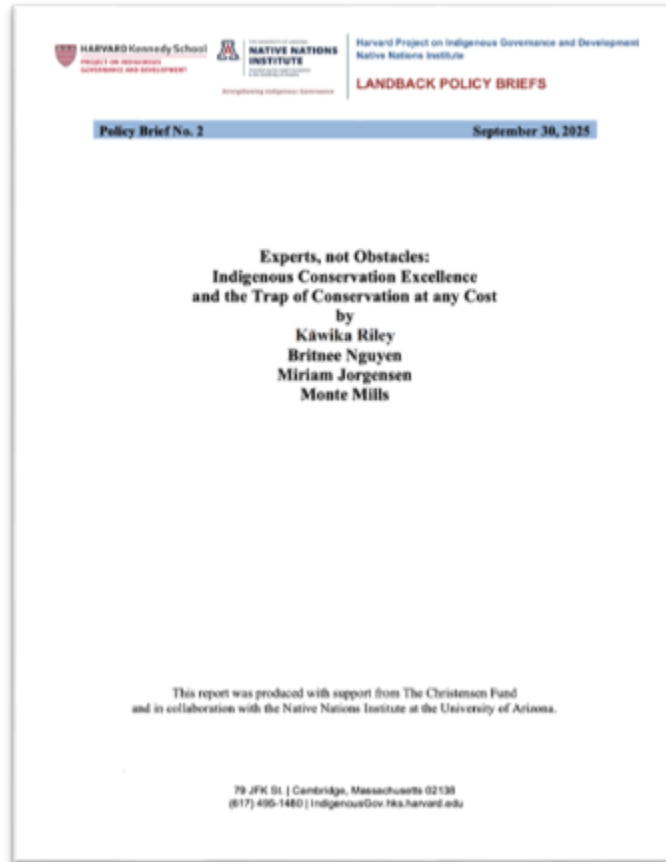
Indigenous Conservation Excellence and
the Trap of *Conservation at Any Cost*



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About the Report



- **Purpose:** Equip allies to advance Indigenous-led conservation and challenge the “conservation at any cost” approach.
- **Shared Foundations:** Ground the report in widely recognized conservation priorities using peer-reviewed scholarship.
- **Approach:** Use a scoping review to synthesize research and highlight the effectiveness of Indigenous conservation.
- **Main Finding:** Indigenous conservation is globally practiced, produces diverse outcomes, and often achieves superior results.

Rapid Scoping Criteria



Indigenous People(s)

Did the study research or report on Indigenous people?



Conservation Practice

Did the study research or describe a conservation practice or system?



Conservation Outcome

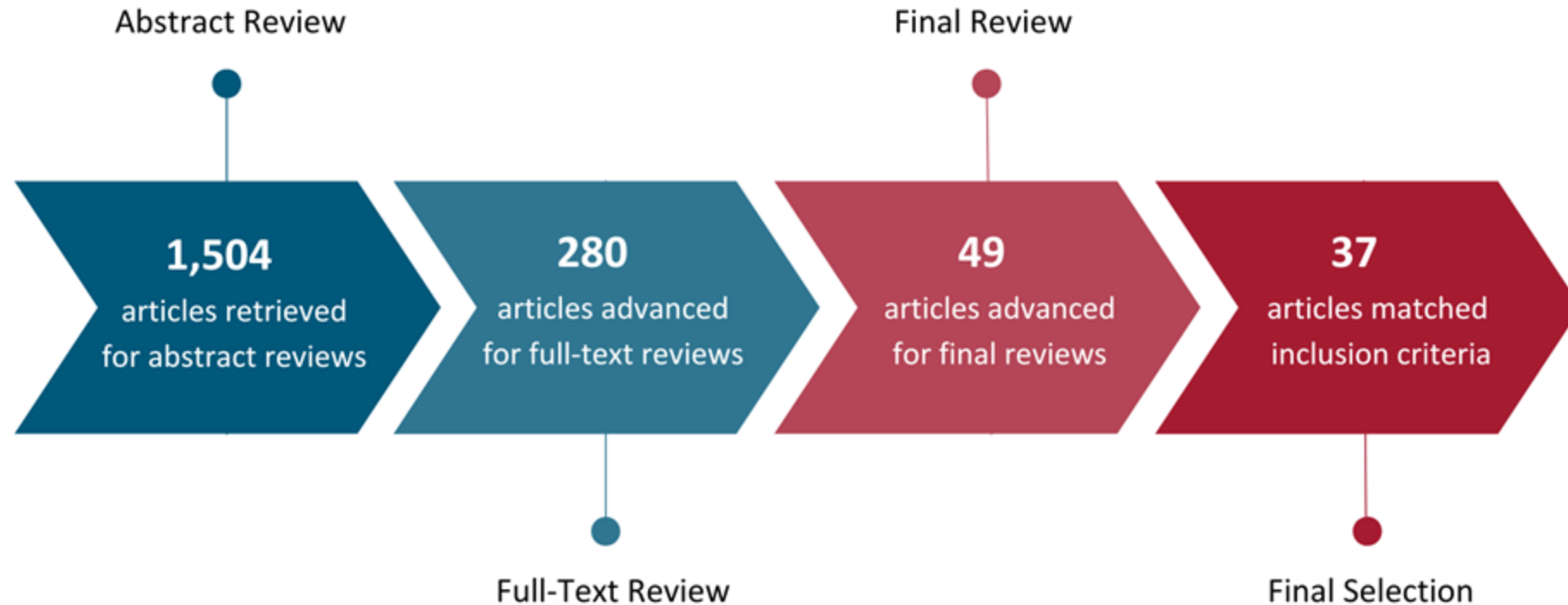
Did the study research or describe a conservation outcome?



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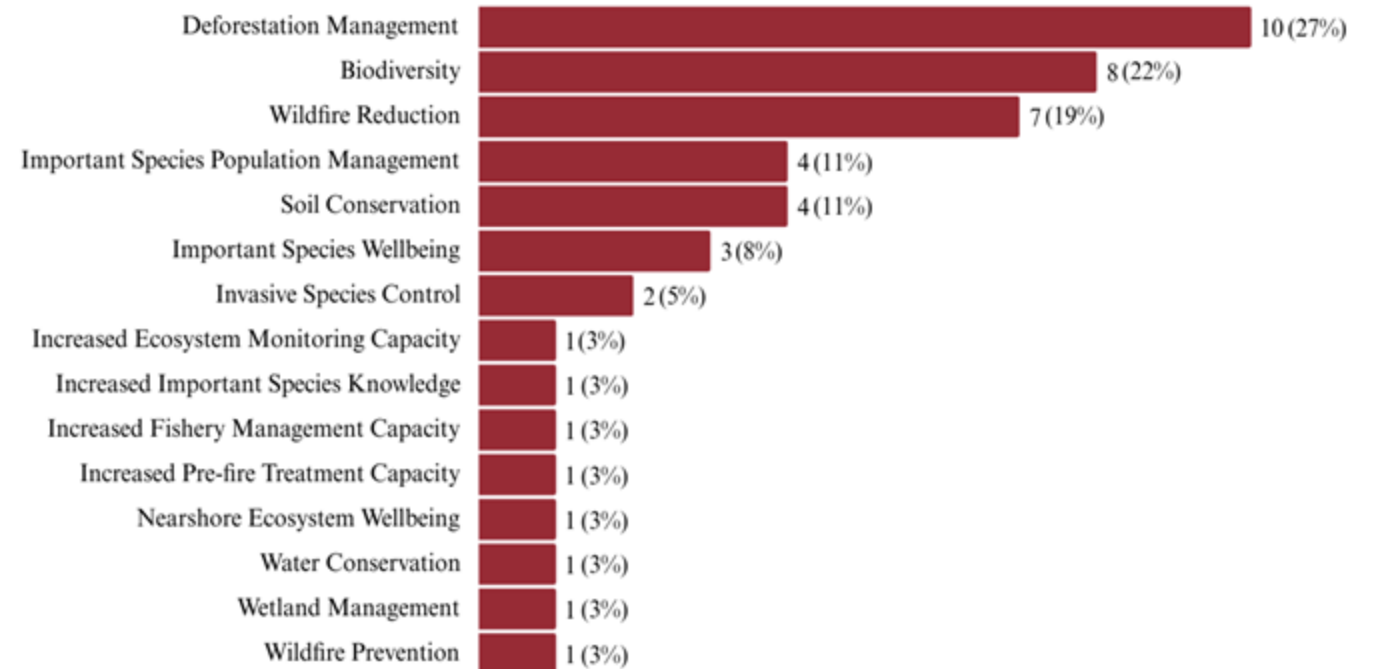
Rapid Scoping Review Process



Indigenous Conservation Outcomes are Numerous

Outcomes by Category

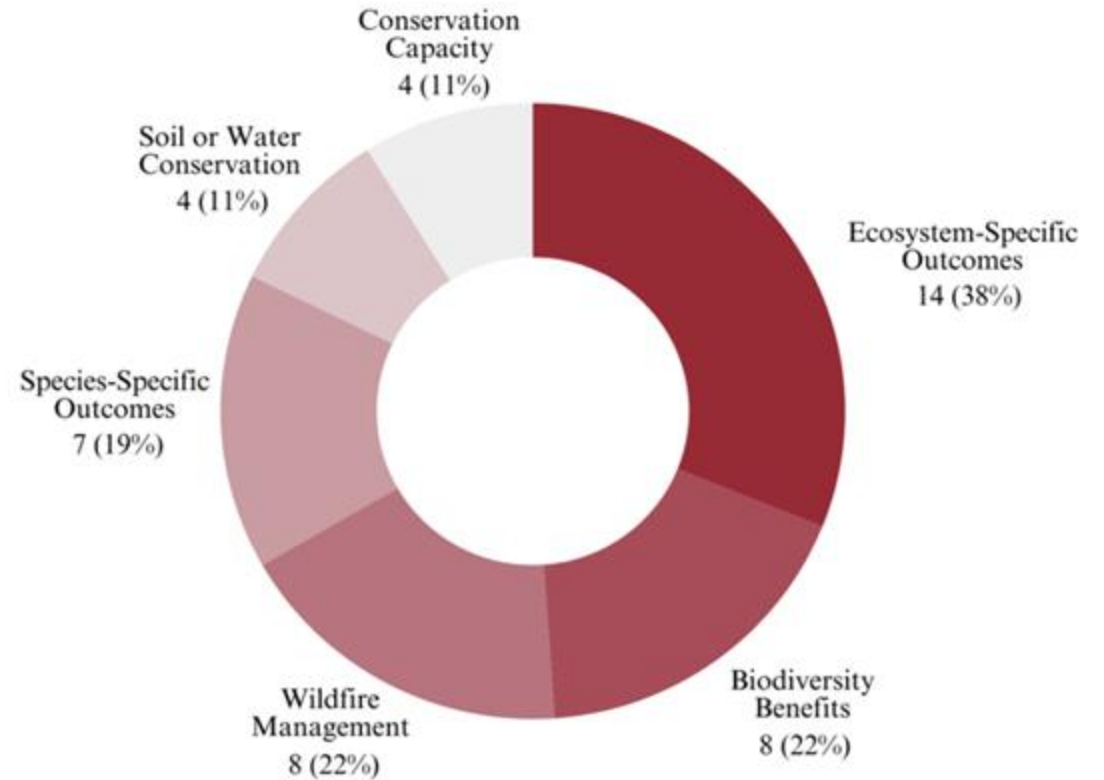
- 15 categories, covering a wide range of commonly desired conservation goals
- Over two-thirds of the studies included the three most prominent outcomes:
 - Deforestation management
 - Biodiversity management
 - Wildfire reduction



Indigenous Conservation Outcomes are Numerous

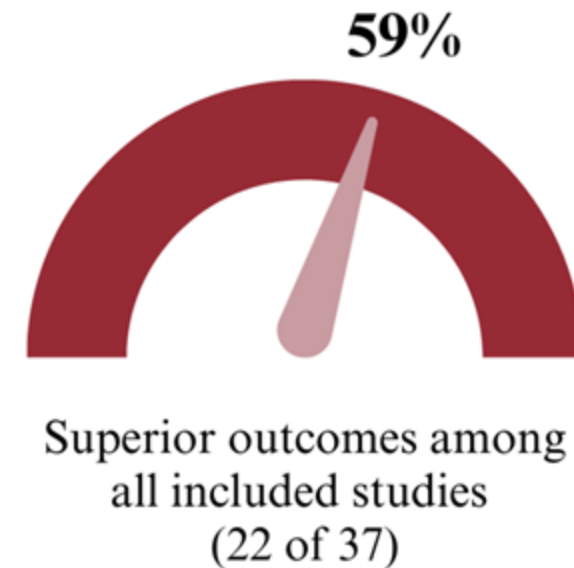
Outcomes by Theme

- Outcomes were broken down into a smaller set of six themes:
 - Ecosystem-specific outcomes
 - Biodiversity benefits
 - Wildfire management
 - Species-specific outcomes
 - Soil or water conservation
 - Conservation capacity
- The top two categories made up 60% of the total outcomes



Indigenous Conservation Outcomes are Often Superior

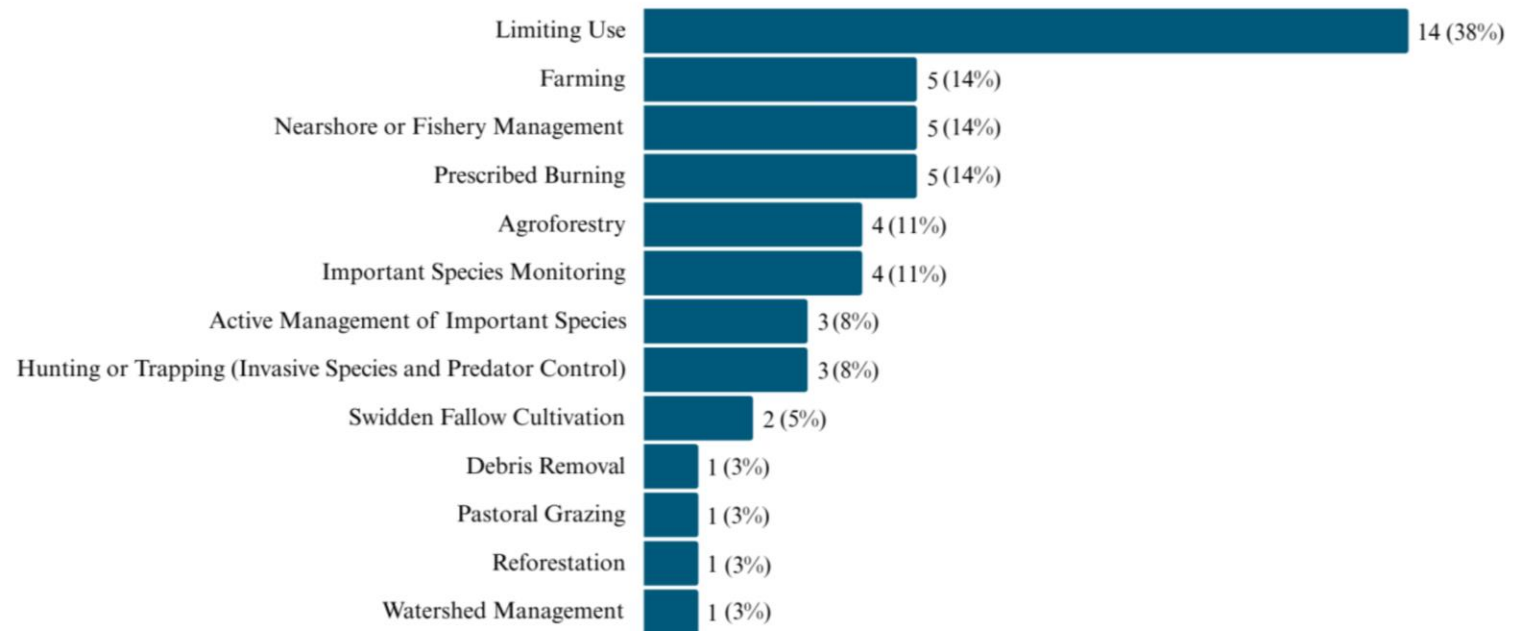
- 59% of the studies found that the Indigenous conservation practices being researched were superior to their counterpart
- Superior outcomes were represented in:
 - Numerous conservation practices
 - Each of the six themes
 - All but one of the six regions



Indigenous Conservation Practices are Numerous

Practices by Category

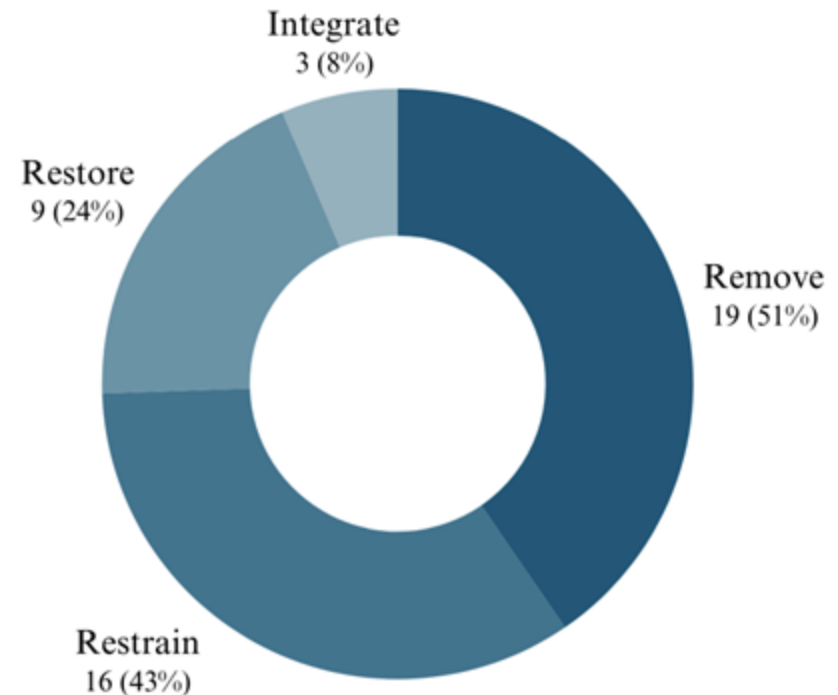
- 13 categories, covering a wide range of understood practices
- Limiting use was the most common category (38%), followed by a three-way tie between:
 - Farming (14%)
 - Nearshore or fishery management (14%)
 - Prescribed burning (14%)



Indigenous Conservation Practices are also Numerous

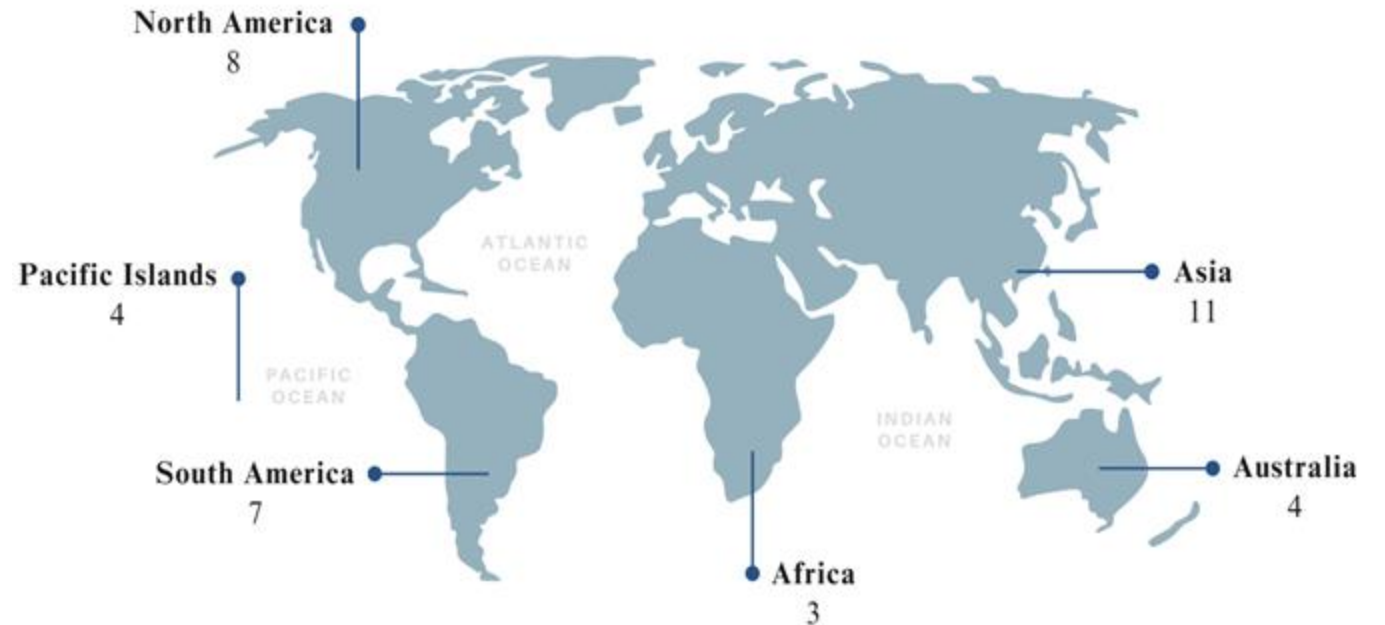
Practices by Theme

- Practices were broken down into four themes:
 - Remove
 - Restrain
 - Restore
 - Integrate
- The two most common, remove and restrain, accounted for more than 90% of the studies



Indigenous Conservation is Globally Practiced

- Indigenous conservation studies covered nearly all major regions.
- When grouped together, the Americas were the largest region.
- When separating North and South America, Asia was the largest.
- Together, the three most represented regions accounted for 70% of the total.

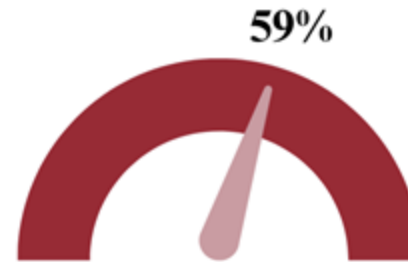


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Associations with Land/Resource Rights

- One in three studies mentioned land or resource rights in association with the researched conservation practices and outcomes.
- Among studies that mentioned the above, 75% found superior conservation outcomes.



Superior outcomes among
all included studies
(22 of 37)



Superior outcomes among studies
mentioning land rights expansion
(9 of 12)



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Final Takeaways

- **Indigenous Peoples are leaders in conservation, not obstacles to it.** Their stewardship protects biodiversity, sustains ecosystems, and strengthens climate resilience.
- Expanding resources and lowering barriers for Indigenous Peoples could further expand positive impacts for Indigenous-managed lands and waters and **help keep the planet livable for all.**
- **Philanthropists, governments, and NGOs could accelerate global progress** by standing behind Indigenous communities whose knowledge and practices are already producing proven results.



Thank You!

For more information, visit IndigenousGov.hks.harvard.edu



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