

# Feral Summary

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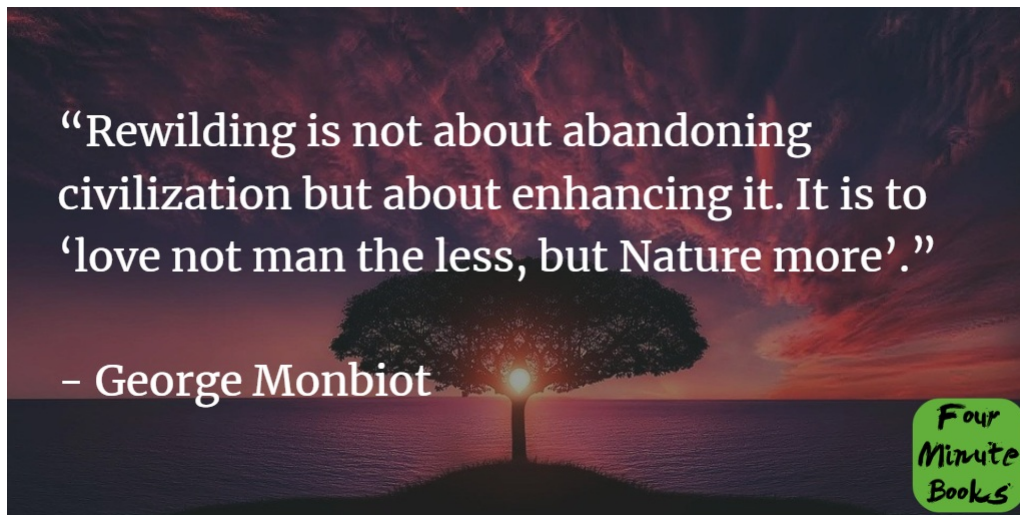


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**1-Sentence-Summary:** *Feral* will help you find ways to improve the well-being of humanity by illustrating the deep connection between us and Nature and offering actionable advice on how to preserve balance in our ecosystems through rewilding.

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



The world becomes increasingly conscious of the environmental crisis it is facing. Consequently, many people now toss around the concept of rewilding. We often talk about it as some sort of a “strategy” to prevent certain species from extinction or increase biodiversity.

In *Feral: Rewilding the Land, the Sea, and Human Life*, George Monbiot explains that the reasons for rewilding extend much further than what we think. Restoring nature in its original shape is not something we do just for the sake of other species. It is something that we, humans, also need for our own well-being.

George Monbiot is a zoologist and nature journalist and has been contributing to *The Guardian* for many years now. In this book, he shares how to “do rewilding right.” His book also discusses how our ecosystems benefit from it. Additionally, he highlights the importance of preserving nature for the sake of the human psyche.

By recounting experiences Brazil and Kenya, he reinforces the much-needed, fresh perspective on the innate connection humans have with nature. This perspective helps us frame rewilding as crucial – rather than a “nice-to-have” project.

Here are 3 lessons that will open your eyes to the necessity of rewilding:

1. Destruction of wild nature has multifaceted consequences.
2. Rewilding can impact human well-being.
3. Large animals protection is crucial for rewilding.

Ready to get a little wild with Mister Monbiot? Let's do it!

## Lesson 1: The consequences of destroying nature are all-encompassing.

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The destruction of coral reefs and rain forests as a consequence of human economical expansion is obvious. Most people agree that we should stop such practices because they harm the global ecosystem. **However, not everyone is aware that destructing wildlife has more consequences than “just” reducing world's biodiversity.**

An ecological organization once sent Monbiot to monitor the impact of Brazilian gold mines on the environment. That was when he saw for himself that it was not just rain forests that were suffering. The indigenous people's cultures, which were dependent on those rain forests, also diminished.

On top the destruction of their living environment, the people were also succumbing to diseases brought by the miners. As a consequence of the Brazilian gold rush, 20% of the indigenous Yanomami tribe living in the rain forest died.

Spending time with Yanomamis in Brazil and then Maasai people in Kenya, Monbiot concluded that these cultures managed to preserve a connection with nature that is mostly foreign to the Western world. He saw himself feeling jealous of this connection. That's what made him start digging into the idea of rewilding. This method can preserve the environment but also restore a human experience known only to indigenous peoples.

The author saw destroying those cultures as one of the many threats of Western nations' economic expansion. That's why he began to work on popularizing and implementing the ideas of rewilding in his native country, the UK – and beyond.

## Lesson 2: Human well-being is dependent on the connection with nature.

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Benjamin Franklin wrote that many Europeans captivated by the Native Americans during the conquest of The New World became acclimatized to the indigenous way of life. What's more, after having spent a significant period of time with the tribes, few wished to return to the colonialist culture. Interestingly, this didn't work the other way around with the Native American captives.

**Monbiot's interpretation of these facts is clear: humans need a close connection with nature to thrive.** Since the indigenous cultures provide such a connection, there is no wonder why so many people find this way of life enticing.

However, today, there is no going back to the hunter-gatherer lifestyle that would enable world's population to embrace a "back to the roots" lifestyle. There are simply too many people for the Earth to feed us in this way. Hence, we need to abide by the civilization we created – but at the same time, we need to create intervention-free zones where nature can have its own rule.

It is, therefore, important to correctly understand the idea of "rewilding"- and separate it from "conservation." The latter, Monbiot explains, is just another form of control over natural environment. In the "conservation areas," people usually favor certain species over others, which leads to creating yet another kind of ecological imbalance.

If we want to truly enjoy the feeling of immersion in nature, we need to designate some areas of land for rewilding – and simply let them be.

### Lesson 3: Rewilding is leaving nature to play by its rules – but it needs to be initiated by re-introducing large animal species.

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There is actually one thing humans should actively do, in order for the process of rewilding to be efficient. **We must restore the populations of certain large animals to initiate the recovery of natural ecosystems.**

To determine which species these are, it helps to look at archaeological findings.

Monbiot shares an example of how this was successfully done at the Seventh Estuary in Wales. Scientists excavated layers of mud to eventually get to the fossils from thousands of years ago. Among other traces of animals and humans, they found footprints of cranes – birds that went extinct in Britain in the 17th century.

Based on that, they assessed that the reintroduction of cranes to the ecosystem would help with rewilding in this area. And indeed – since 2009 the species has been revived, which contributed a great deal to restoring natural balance in the region.

Monbiot points out that the species that should be restored are usually large animals – such as wolves, bears or wild boars. That's because they are often the ones that keep ecosystems lively and diverse. Wild boars, for example, do that by digging into earth and creating mini-habitats for various species of plants to thrive.

Once the crucial species are re-introduced into the ecosystems, Monbiot argues that we should leave the rewilding areas to operate by their own rules. Only this way we can preserve real wildlife, which is crucial to our own well-being.

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## **Feral Review**

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*Feral* is an account from a journalist, author and researcher – but most importantly, from an avid nature lover. You can literally feel his amazement with nature as you read his words. Monbiot's book is compelling also because it doesn't focus on criticising the destructive human impact on the planet. Instead, it offers practical solutions that we can use to restore balance in our ecosystems.

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## **Who would I recommend the Feral summary to?**

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The 28-year-old environmental activist who looks for actionable solutions to help the planet, the 45-year-old urban planner searching for ways in which civilisation and nature can coexist, and to anyone who cares about the natural environment of Planet Earth.