



Earth Jurisprudence Update

Earth-centred News and Inspiration

Greetings Friends,

“How can we align ourselves with life in every choice we make?”

This is the question that arises from a rich dialogue with Janine Benyus of the Biomimicry Institute in our featured podcast: The Nature Of. From river guardianship to forest restoration, from defending the deep seas to sharing open-pollinated seed; in a sense all of the stories and initiatives in this Earth Jurisprudence Update offer some response to this most essential of questions.

In the face of the death-dealing juggernaut that is modernity, we are called to affirm life, seed diversity, enhance living systems. This is the vision of Earth Jurisprudence in practice. May the dialogues and deeds celebrated in this newsletter stimulate your resolve to align with life in all that you do.

Wishing you inspiration,

Carlotta, on behalf of the Gaia Team

African Earth Jurisprudence Collective

The Forest is Life: Restoring the Health of People and Place in Benin

Chief Atawé Akôyi A. Oussou Lio speaks of his life's mission to restore forests as part of a holistic approach to agroecology in Benin, including replanting his beloved breadfruit trees. “I have learnt much along the way, and most of all from the nature of the forests themselves. I am especially grateful for the lesson of unity: that as healthy individuals, we contribute to a healthy whole. We get back what we put into this reciprocal system, held together by our sacred natural sites.”



Chief Atawé Akôyi by Amy Forshaw

The Role of African Women in Revitalising Ecological & Cultural Diversity

On International Women's Day, Sahara celebrated the vital contribution of women in Africa to restoring balance in the human-Earth relationship. The two-part feature recounts the story and experiences of Mashudu Takalani, member of the African Earth Jurisprudence Collective, and her collaborative work with EarthLore Foundation in South Africa and Zimbabwe. "Her journey is one of resilience – returning to her ancestral home in Mazwimba village as a young widow with her son, she embraced her roots and took on the challenge of revitalising local food sovereignty and community unity."

Living Waters

River Guardianship in the UK

"Water is far older than the Earth. Water is older than the star that we call the Sun. Water was born in the furthest reaches of space from the dying of the first stars 12 billion years ago. And water is one of the most stable of molecules. When Earth was very young, just 300 million years old, water travelled here as icy comets and melted to create our oceans. And it was water's paradoxical nature - her fluidity and her stability - that enabled life to begin." These are the spine-tingling words of Dr Louise Bodnar upon accepting her role as a Voice of the River Wye on the River Wye Nutrient Management Board this April.



River Wye by Christopher Price via Flickr

Is A River Alive?

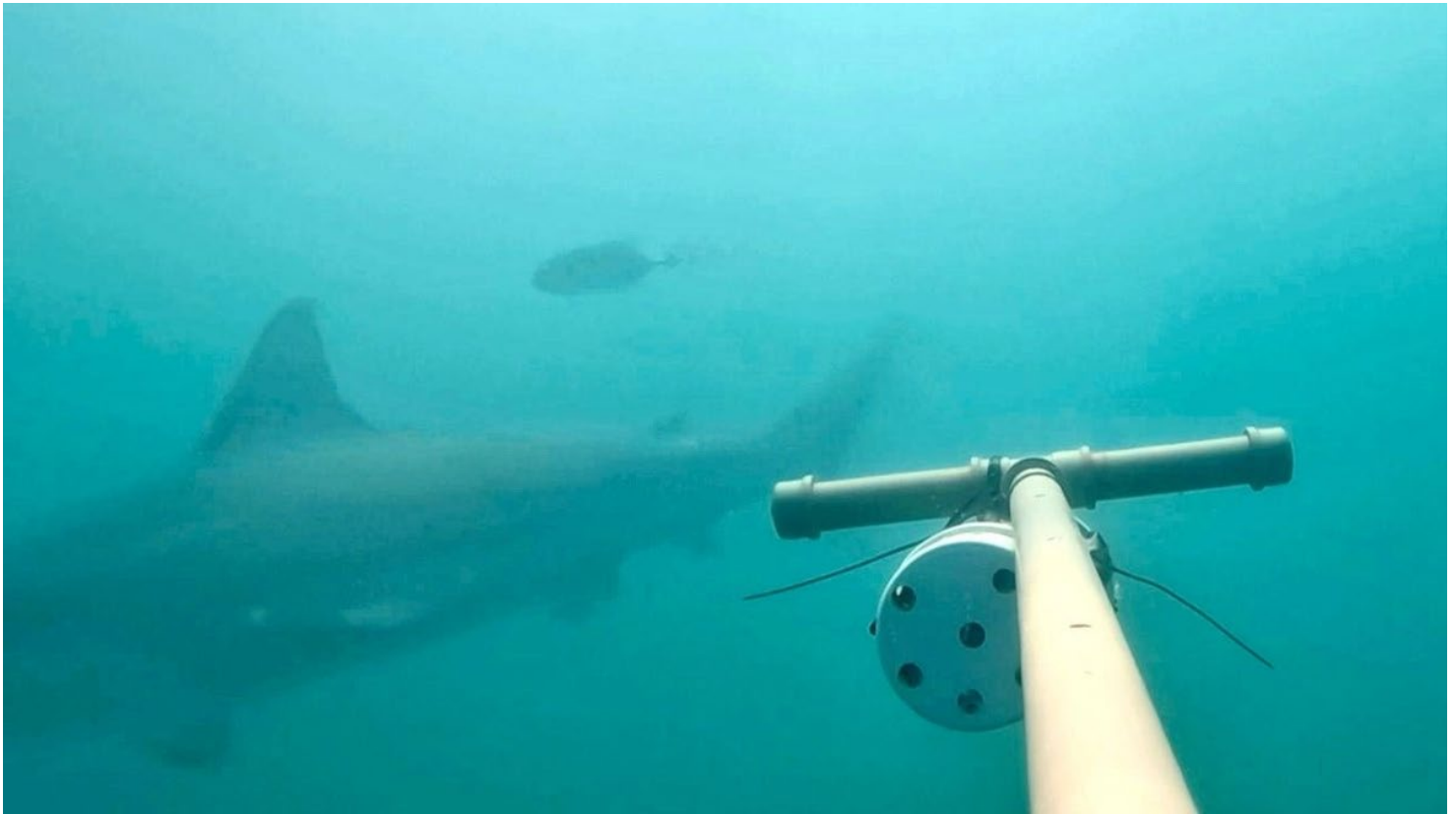
Robert Macfarlane introduces his latest book: “To think of a river as alive is to begin to open new ways of relating to rivers; new ways to imagine freshwater otherwise. And God knows we need such new thinking: our rivers have become first undrinkable, then unswimmable, then untouchable. How did it come to this — and where do we go from here?”

Sharks And Rays: From Fear to Reverence

“Shifting our perspective from extraction to reverence, from seeing the ocean as “other” to embracing her as kin, is essential to restoring our relationship with the sea and all the life she sustains. A case in point is our attitude toward sharks and rays...” Gaia’s Fiona Wilton shares how our partners in Brazil and Uruguay are restoring respect for these ancient, sentient beings and encouraging both deeper responsibility and concrete steps to protect them.

Defending the Deep Seas

“If humanity is going to survive, and play a healthy role in the Gaian system, all of us will have to learn to accept limits — that certain areas of the world are not for us humans to exploit but belong to Gaia and the untold species that inhabit them.” Erik Assadourian exposes how deep sea mining represents a grave threat to the Earth's ability to regenerate.



BRUV filming, Ilha Grande Bay by IBRACON / Projeto Tubarões da Baía da Ilha Grande

Learning from Nature

Podcast Spotlight: The Nature of Podcast with Janine Benyus

Willow Defebaugh of The Nature of podcast is joined by Janine Benyus, co-founder of the Biomimicry Institute. “Together, they outline the principles of biomimicry—the practice of looking to ecosystems, organisms, and natural patterns for sustainable solutions to human challenges.... Janine reveals how nature has already solved many of the problems we face today. The question then becomes: how can we align ourselves with life in every choice we make?”

Genius of Nature: Learning How to Live Gracefully on this Planet

In this article from the brilliant Resurgence & Ecologist Magazine Archive, Janine Benyus shares inspiring stories from the interdisciplinary field of biomimicry. “What life in ensemble has learned to do is to create conditions conducive to life. And that's what we have to learn.” To mark and celebrate Resurgence & Ecologist Magazine’s 60th anniversary in 2026, [The Resurgence Trust is offering discounted membership \(with promotional code C36\)](#); as a member you will receive six issues of the magazine a year amongst many other benefits.



Hummingbird by Larry Lunt via Flickr

Ecological Governance

Tracking the Latest Developments

In late April, catalysed by the leadership of the Women Leaders Defending Lake Titicaca, the Regional Council of Puno in Perú passed an ordinance recognising [Lake Titicaca as a subject of rights](#). Meanwhile, in the Netherlands, [Groningen City Council is exploring how the wider web of life might have a voice in decision-making processes](#). In the UK, Moral Imaginations and partners hosted an [Interspecies Council to craft a more-than-human response to the UK government's draft Land Use Framework](#).

Ecological Economics

Seed Economics

“Nature is inherently generous, not only with her bounty but also with her knowledge. What can an understanding of seed teach us about the potential to regrow an economic system based on abundance and reciprocity?” Gaia’s Sinéad Fortune and Amber Hayward explore how through learning from seeds – the kernels of life – we can reimagine economies in alignment with the abundance of living systems.



Seed sharing during the 2024 African Earth Jurisprudence Collective Learning Exchange in Kenya by Andy Pilsbury