**The role of science in the conservation world: a naïve exploration**

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The advent of science (hard, material science) into the world of conservation has meant many good things for the field, and, for many decades, it has remained the preferred approach to conservation problems and decision-making: it seemed sound, efficient and able to cope with nearly every relevant aspect of conservation practice. In fact, science (hard science) has thoroughly permeated the activity, shaping the image conservation projects of itself and, it might be suspected, even its very goals and agenda. However, there is a stark contrast between the chemical and physical research carried on conservation-related topics, and the way conservation is actually developed. The contrast we are speaking here is not just epistemic in nature: it is not just related to how reality is perceived and understood, but also to how conservation is carried on (or, going a step further, to how conservation *can* actually be successfully carried on). In this contribution, the actual impact of science in conservation will be observed from a deliberately naïve standpoint, in an attempt to get rid of as many prejudices as possible. Adopting such a standpoint allows us to realize that the idea that the impact conservation science has had on conservation is much smaller than it might seem. Furthermore, it may even hint at the idea that the impact conservation science *can have* on conservation is much smaller than it might seem.