

## Diary from quarantine – 5 – *Humans' lockdown, Nature's freedom*

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Like it or not, spring arrived and, with a sort of cosmic irony that puts us in our place, we cannot feel it, see it, or smell it. Nevertheless, spring is here.

I bet many of you are experiencing the same feelings. My friends in the United Arab Emirates will not be able to have a walk on the beach for a few days, dozens of people in Jordan are quarantined on the beautiful Dead Sea, and this year the perfumes of Jama'a al-Ifna in Marrakesh will invade only a few noses.

Here in Italy trees are blossoming and birds sing until sunset.

Coronavirus is reminding us, among other things, that Humans do not own Nature, we are just part of it.

With humans on lockdown, rabbits came back in the parks of Milan and [dolphins](#) made their way to many spots along the 7,456 kilometers of Italian shores, especially around Sardinia.



I will never demonize progress and human influence on nature *per se*.

However, it is undeniable that nature is sending us a message: not only are humans not indispensable, but we are often – too often – harmful for all the other species.

Surface particulate matter [decreased](#) by 20%-30% over huge areas of China and here in Lombardy concentrations of nitrogen dioxide, or NO<sub>2</sub>, [fell drastically](#), while the water of Venetian channels has not been so clean in decades.



Before and after coronavirus outbreak (right and left respectively)

These are the only positive consequences of the pandemic: letting Nature take a break from humans and proving that remote working is often very effective and should be supported as much as possible.

We will resume our lives, all of us want that. However, we will have to do it with new understanding of our – very finite – place in this universe.

We are part of a whole, we are guests and not owners.

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