

Ecosystems
Knowledge
Network



Understanding an ecosystems approach

Jonathan Porter, Countryside

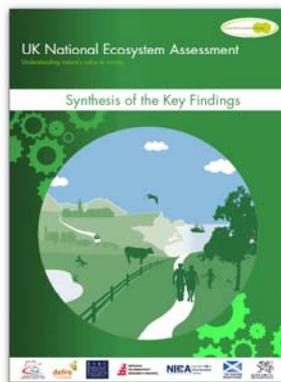
Understanding the Benefits of Ecosystem Services
24th June 2014
Brighton University

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Why do we need an ecosystems approach?



“The natural world, its biodiversity and its constituent ecosystems are critically important to our well-being and economic prosperity.”

Since 1945:

- Substantial increases in provisioning (food) services
- Decreases in many other ecosystem services

Last 10-20 years:

- Around a third of the services from UK ecosystems declining

International context

- Advocacy of an ecosystems approach originates in science-policy debate at the intergovernmental level, notably through the *Convention on Biological Diversity* (1992)

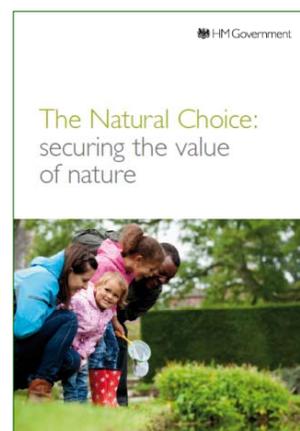


CBD signatories adopted this approach as the primary framework for action under the convention in 1995

- CBD understands the approach as “*a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way*”

UK context

- In the UK advocacy of an ‘ecosystems approach’ has steadily grown
- Defra published first action plan in 2007 to support policy innovation in this area (updated 2010)
- Range of science projects to support the research and evidence base: data, guidelines and tools (UKNEA, BESS...)
- Elaborated further in the Natural Environment White Paper (2011)



England's first ecosystem approach policy

Outcome 1C. By 2020, at least 17% of land and inland water, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, conserved through effective, integrated and joined up approaches to safeguard biodiversity and ecosystem services including through management of our existing systems of protected areas and the establishment of nature improvement areas.



National Planning Policy Framework – Section 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

109. The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

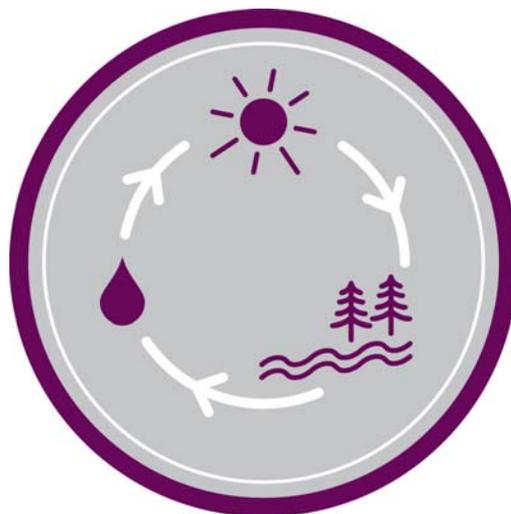
- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;
- recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;
- minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures...

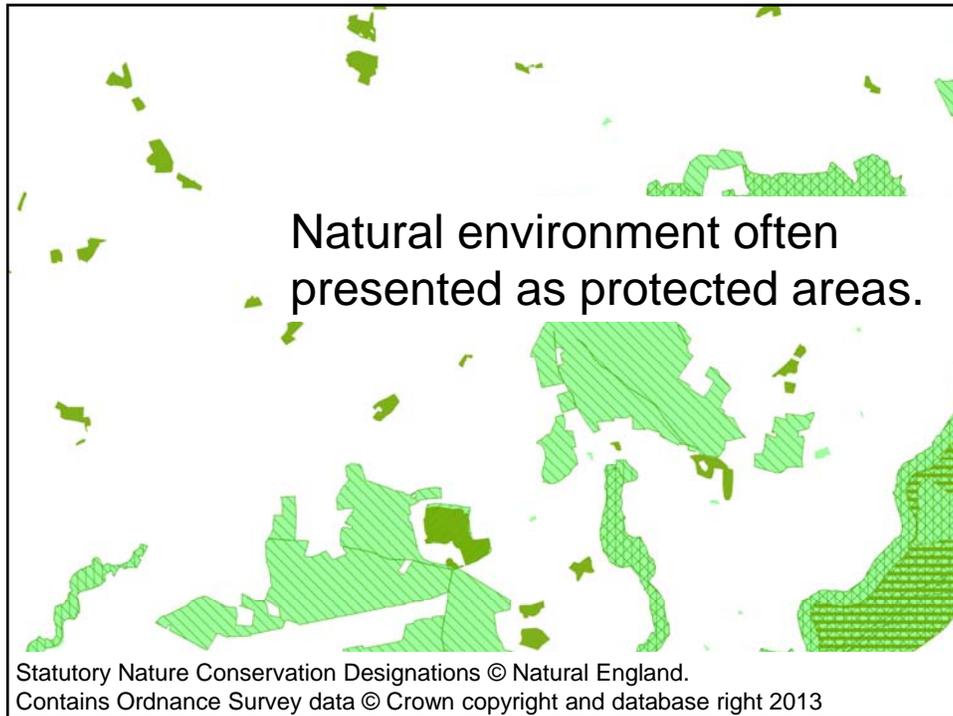
Key elements of the ecosystem approach



A strategy for integrated sustainable land and sea management that considers the whole ecosystem.

Understanding how nature works



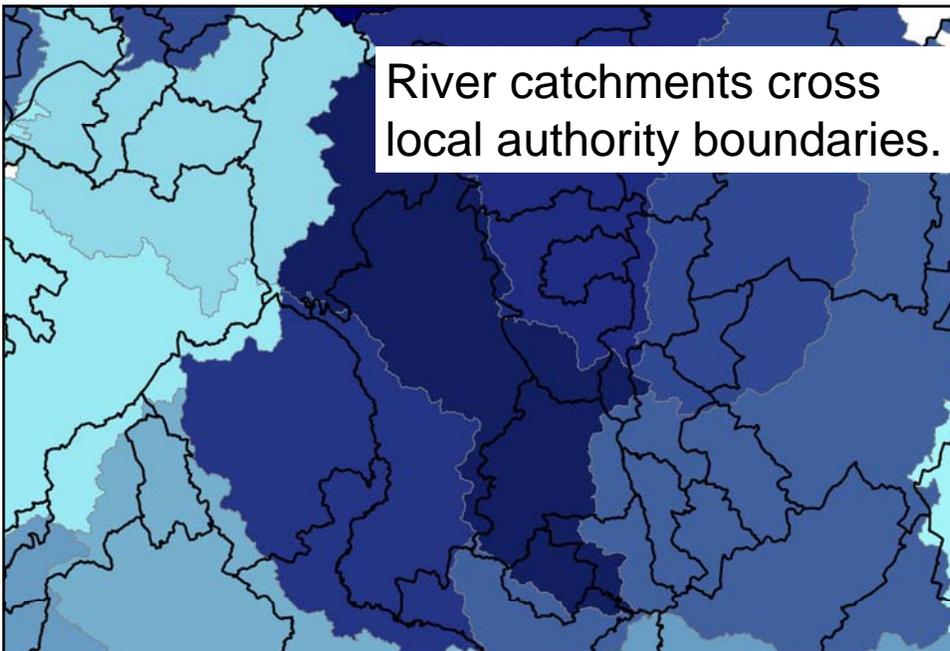


Iconic top predators can thrive in urban landscapes.

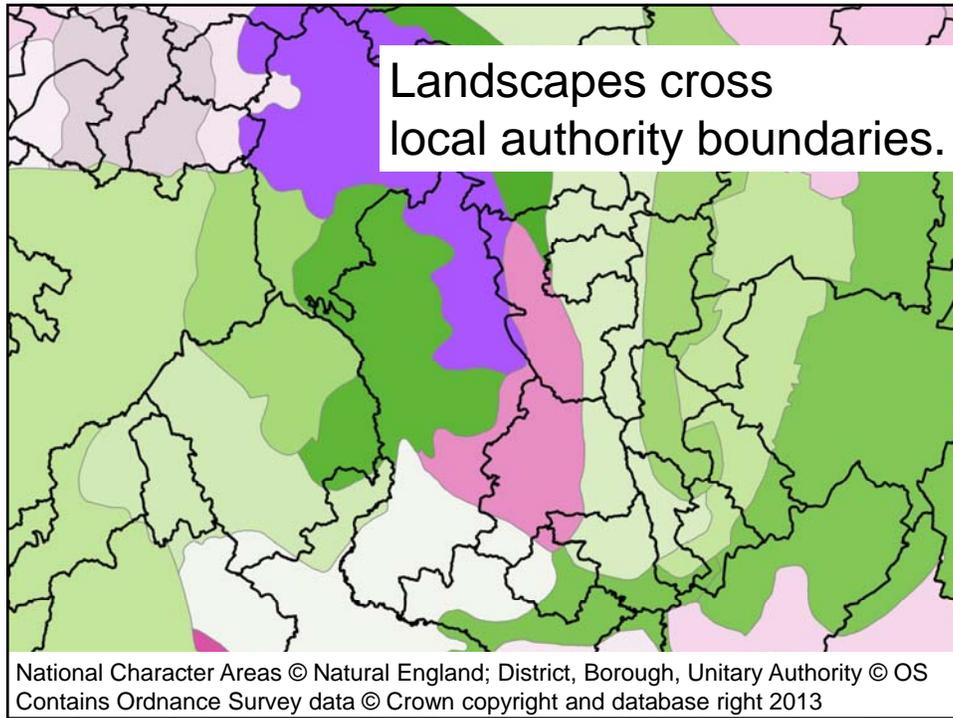


Peregrine falcon © SXC

River catchments cross local authority boundaries.



River Catchment © Environment Agency; District, Borough, Unitary Authority © OS
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Effects can be felt a long way from source.



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Valuing nature's services



Valuing nature's services

An ecosystems approach is not about putting a price on nature.



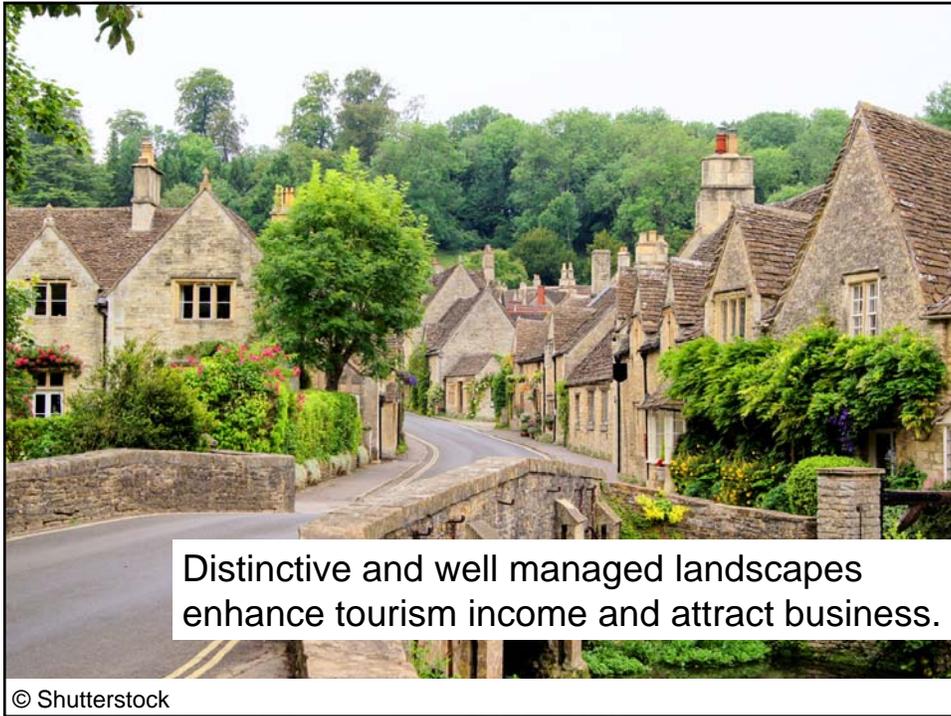
The ecosystem approach is about ensuring that the value of the natural environment (not just monetary) is recognised in decision making.



*“Ecosystems should be managed for their **intrinsic values** and for the tangible and intangible benefits for humans, in a fair and equitable way”*



Food and timber production and processing generate wealth and employment.



Distinctive and well managed landscapes enhance tourism income and attract business.

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Property values are enhanced by access to green infrastructure.

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Plans are more robust and more likely to succeed with meaningful public engagement



© Ivan Gajos, Countryscape

Accessible natural green space encourages active recreation.



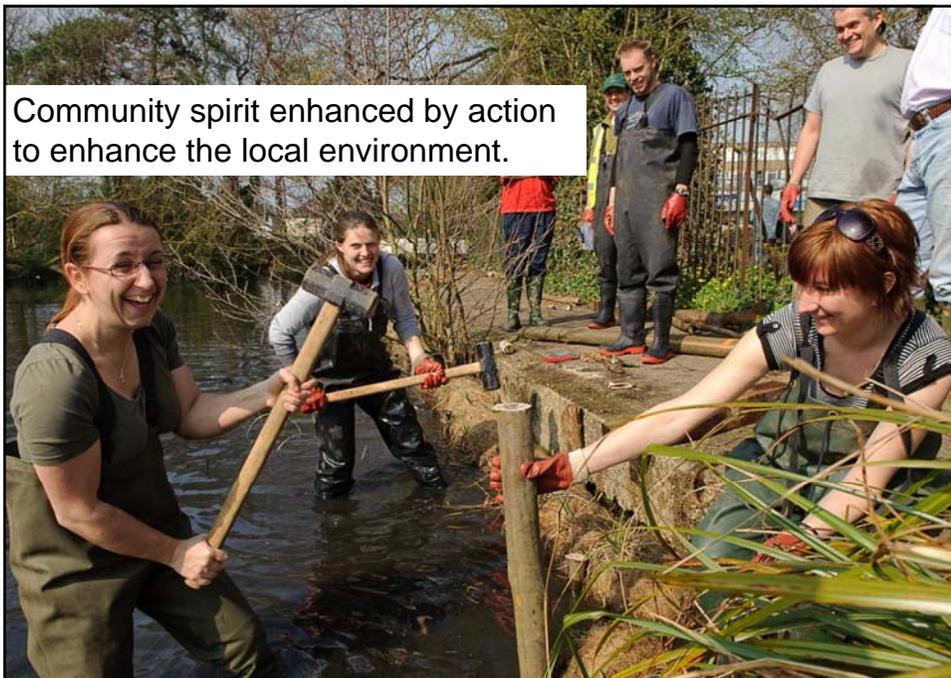
© Tommy Haydn / South West Lakes Trust

Contact with the natural environment improves physical and mental health.



© John McFarlane / Forestry Commission Picture Library

Community spirit enhanced by action to enhance the local environment.



© Wandle Trust



Ecosystems Knowledge Network



A resource for anyone wanting to share knowledge or learn about the practical benefits of an ecosystems approach

1300 members from practice, policy and research

**UK-wide • Events • Newsletters
Discussion • Information sharing**

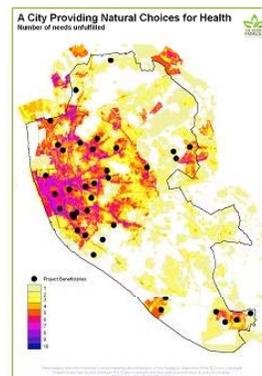
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- A focus on collective issues, priorities and solutions for all aspects of water.
- A long-term Forum that draws together diverse interests, from fishing to farming, from wildlife to water supply from timber to tourism.
- Ecosystem service mapping used to prioritise different services provided by the catchment– e.g. food provisioning and flood regulation.



- £296,000 funds made available from the Primary Care Trust for green infrastructure to deliver health benefits
- 38 successful projects being delivered (from 122 expressions of interest)
- Projects focussed on areas where green infrastructure would make the greatest difference to addressing health inequalities



Mayesbrook, East London

- Local community redesigned their park, backed up by a partnership of public, private and charity organisations.
- Study showed £7 of benefits can be delivered for every £1 invested in the park. £1.4 million Phase 1 complete.
- Delivering natural flood management of benefit to London. Providing spaces that will benefit people and wildlife.



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Find out more and get involved



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Thank you for your attention

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