VALUING NATURE

WetlandLIFE

Tim Acott PI

University of Greenwich: Tim Acott, Adriana Ford
Natural Resource Institute: Gay Gibson, Frances Hawkes, Bob Cheke
University of Bristol: Peter Coates
Cranfield University: Anil Graves, Joe Morris, Sharanya Basu Roy
University of Brighton: Andrew Church, Neil Ravenscroft, Mary Gearey
Public Health England: Jolyon Medlock, Alex Vaux
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Emergent narratives – Health and Wellbeing

Wetlands, human health & wellbeing

At WWT we see first-hand the way that nature improves people’s sense of wellbeing.
“In the UK mosquitoes can create a distressing biting nuisance, which affects the well-being of local residents and can pose a major economic problem in areas where tourism is a main source of income to the local community. Experts agree that climate change will make the UK more vulnerable to the problems caused by mosquitoes”.

(Quoted from Management of Invasive Species of Mosquitoes, 2017, pg. 2)
Project Aims

• Develop our understanding of diverse wetland values and how mosquitoes may or may not affect these values;
• Contribute knowledge for the management of wetlands to enhance social and ecological wellbeing;
• Explore and create narratives around people’s relationships with wetlands and mosquitoes

Conceptual Framework
• Ecological Surveys (mosquitoes)
• Economic Valuation
• Environmental History
• Social Science (Community Voice, interviews)
• Contemporary social representations
• Photos essay
• Artists work

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Nested Ecosystem Services

- Services underpinned by relational socio-ecological networks
- Revealing these relations requires multiple approaches to knowledge
- Values are linked to ‘nature’ narratives
- Valuing wetlands is an inter- (multi, trans, a-, un-,) disciplinary endeavour
- WetlandLIFE has pursued the values of wetlands by bringing together a multi-disciplinary team producing a range of interdisciplinary outputs
Ecosystem Services and Valuing Nature

- Limitations of current approaches recognised
- Where are we from a disciplinary perspective?
- Natural Science and Economics: Foundational
- Social Science: Widely accepted and adopted e.g. shared values
- Arts and Humanities: Uncertainty
- Difficulties start to arise at the arts / science interface
Ecosystem Services and Valuing Nature

Arts based research

Ecosystem Services and Valuing Nature

Arts as invited guest

But: Does part of arts value lie in being an outsider, independent

Planning the party together
Epistemological Equality (WetlandLIFE example)

continuum

Natural Science: Positivism
Social Science (quantitative)
Social Science (qualitative)
Creative social research
Research Based Art

Ecology, mosquitos
Economics / questionnaires
CVM / Interviews
Social Research using the arts
Art

Factual evidence of mosquito distribution / control
Eliciting and shared values of wetlands (and mosquitos)
Creative narratives / empathy for wetlands

Knowledge, meanings and wetlands

Holistic Narrative of Valuing Wetlands

A social science way of thinking about things!
Impact and Implications: Practical Outputs

- Mosquito Handbook for use by Public Health England and Wetland Stakeholders

An algorithm for predicting the mosquito species likely to be associated with wetland habitats in England was devised.

This tool will be incorporated into a practical handbook for wetland site managers to enable targeted site surveys for mosquito fauna, informed planning of wetland expansion and restoration schemes, and responsiveness to enquiries from the public regarding mosquitoes and wetlands. This will be produced as an interdisciplinary output with ecological information sensitively embedded within socio-cultural perspectives.

WetlandLIFE already approached by two research partnerships asking for information on how to deal with problems of mosquito nuisance in relation to wetland expansion / management
Endorsements:
"This book is warmly welcomed. I have been waiting for such a book on this topic for 25 years since I began researching and writing about wetlands from a conservation, cultural, human and historical point of view in the early 1990s".
Rod Giblett (Author of Canadian Wetlands, Postmodern Wetlands, Cities and Wetlands, etc.,:}

Impact and Implications: Academic Outputs
Impact and Implications: Developing the Conversations / Empathy

1. Creating and helping others to create new values and positive narratives around the importance of wetlands
2. RAMSAR Culture Network
3. Wetlands on Wheels
4. Hide and Seek
5. Photo Essay

Hide and Seek initiative by Victoria Leslie
Impact and Implications: Developing the Conversations / Empathy

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Marginal Species by Victoria Leslie

Mosquito and Me - a narrative on mosquitoes in English wetlands in 2018

Hide and Seek initiative by Victoria Leslie
Impact and Implications: Developing the Conversations

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Project-based narrative

Social sciences – ecology – economics – arts - humanities

Our journey

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1. Conceptual Nested Ecosystem Services / relationality and wetlands

2. Diverse approaches to knowledge (ecology, economics, history, social science, art) giving rise to Epistemological Equality and reflections on disciplinarity

3. Case examples of art based research and valuing wetlands (nature) through film, photography, writing and performance working alongside science and social science perspectives.

4. Values as narratives composed of multiple elements in nature of value elicitation and
WetlandLIFE Approach
Valuing Nature and Valuing Wetlands

Key Messages

• Valuing is a process

• It is difficult and messy but multiple perspectives enrich our understanding of nature’s values

• Be open to the contributions from different approaches to knowledge

• People do research, individual relations are critical for interdisciplinary outputs

• What we value is linked to what we think is important, multiple approaches to knowledge can help explore, understand and develop empathy with wetlands and other
People are behind disciplines

Taking the bite out of wetlands: managing mosquitoes and the socio-ecological value of wetlands for wellbeing or

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