Ecosystem services are the benefits provided by environmental processes that contribute to human welfare, and healthy and prosperous societies. Ecosystem services include food and fuel production, provision of clean water and clean air, pollination, and flood regulation. Although their annual contribution to the economy has been valued at over £3 trillion, recent studies demonstrate that, globally, ecosystem services are being degraded at increasing rates.
DELIVERING IMPACT

CEH delivers integrated long-term datasets, modelling frameworks and experimental evidence to quantify the natural processes that underpin ecosystem services.

CEH has delivered the Integrated Assessment component of Countryside Survey, to assess the status and sustainability of ecosystem services in the UK. This is groundbreaking new science and the results are being fed into the National Ecosystem Assessment. Together, they will be used to inform future monitoring requirements and scenario testing to help plan for more sustainable use of our natural capital.

CEH research provides evidence to enable local, national and international policy-makers to manage landscapes more effectively for the provision of ecosystem services.

FUTURE CHALLENGES

Ecosystems have interdependent components delivering many services simultaneously; quantifying how delivery of one service causes changes to another is a significant challenge.

Scientific evidence is required to quantify trade-offs among multiple ecosystem services to ensure accurate and relevant evidence is provided to policy-makers.

Ecosystem services research requires an interdisciplinary approach. To meet this challenge, CEH collaborates with social scientists and economists. This ensures that societal and environmental considerations are brought together to support public policy and business practice.