

# **ECOSYSTEM SERVICES IN NEW ZEALAND**

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# ECOSYSTEM SERVICES IN NEW ZEALAND

CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

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Edited by

John R. Dymond



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## PREFACE

Ecosystem services are benefits obtained by people from ecosystems. It may seem like a fancy name for what we used to call natural resource use. However, there is more recognition in what the resources are being used for, that is, for human well-being. As such, consideration of ecosystem services promotes a broader view of all those services that contribute to human well-being, both individually and collectively. To clarify this broader perspective, the recently completed Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA) classified ecosystem services as either provisioning, regulating, supporting, or cultural. Provisioning services are usually well represented in resource management decisions, but the regulating, cultural, and supporting services are more often not.

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment completed a global assessment of ecosystem services. It found that over the past 50 years, humans have changed ecosystems more rapidly and extensively than in any other comparable period of time in human history. These changes have contributed to net gains in human well-being and economic development, but with increased risks of non-linear changes, and the exacerbation of poverty for some groups. The MEA was necessarily conducted at a global scale. However, in New Zealand, management of natural resources is usually conducted at national and regional scales. If we are to expect improvement in natural resource management through a broader and more direct consideration of benefits, then assessment of ecosystem services should also be at these scales.

Therefore, leading scientists and academics have come together to produce this book – the first national assessment of ecosystem services in New Zealand. The conditions and trends of ecosystems as well as their services are considered through chapters which synthesise already published data. The initial chapters focus predominantly on ecosystems, while the middle chapters focus predominantly on services. The final chapters present analysis of ecosystem services. The emphasis throughout has been on understanding the science that underpins the functioning of our ecosystems, so that their management can be based on knowledge. Each chapter has undergone internal review from the author's institution and then editorial review overseen by the editor. As such, the opinions expressed in each chapter are those of the authors and not of Manaaki Whenua Press.

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