

Assessing Ecosystem Services: An English Case Study

Marion Potschin & Roy Haines-Young

Centre for Environmental Management,
School of Geography,
University of Nottingham,
England

Marion.Potschin@Nottingham.ac.uk





Overview

- Background
- Approaches
 - Habitats vs Services
- The need for a landscape or place-based approach
- Progress and prospects



Background

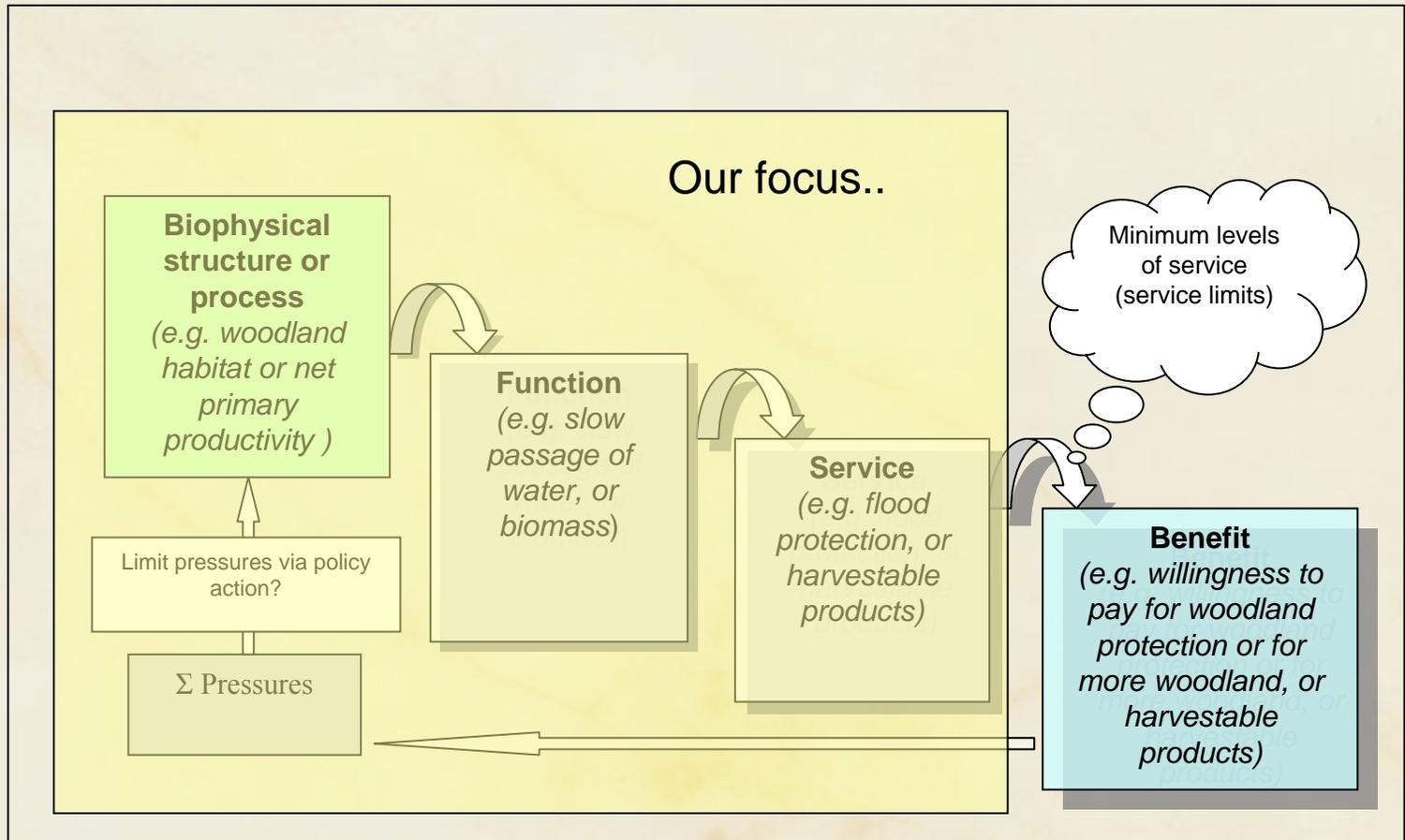
- Central Government (Defra) are exploring the implications of promoting the Ecosystem Approach (EA)....
- Defra Research programme
- This project is looking specifically at whether the EA can help secure the better management of the ecosystem goods and services associated with England's major terrestrial ecosystems.
 - *What is the current status of these services and future trends?*



Approaches

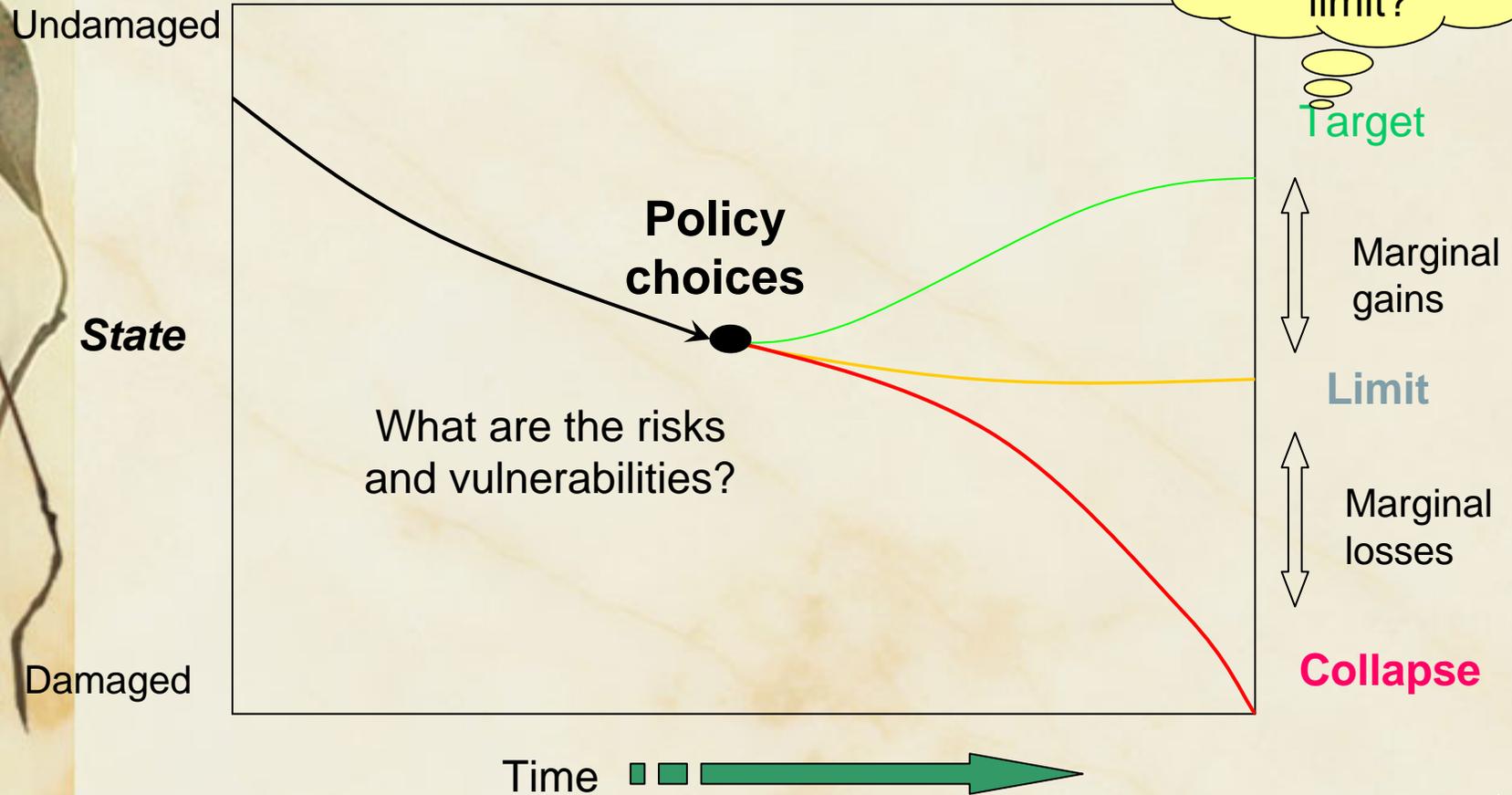
- The study has partly been stimulated by Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA)
 - This has provided an initial typology...
 - But methods and approaches have to be adapted to local circumstances & concerns...
 - And have been limited by time and resources available
 - *This is not a full MA for England!*

Approaches

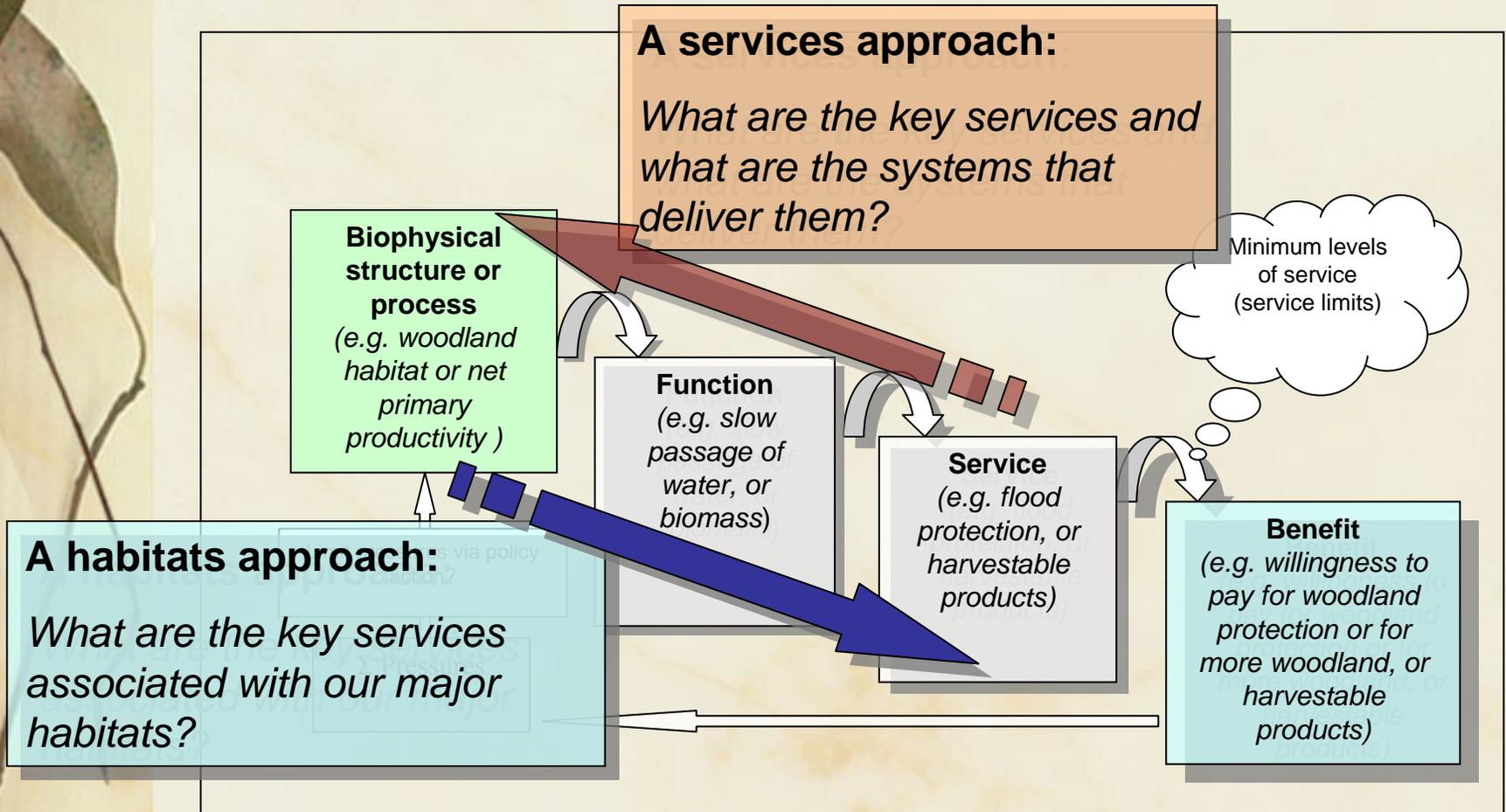


Approaches:

Ultimately we have to Estimate marginal benefits and losses



Approaches



Comparison of Approaches

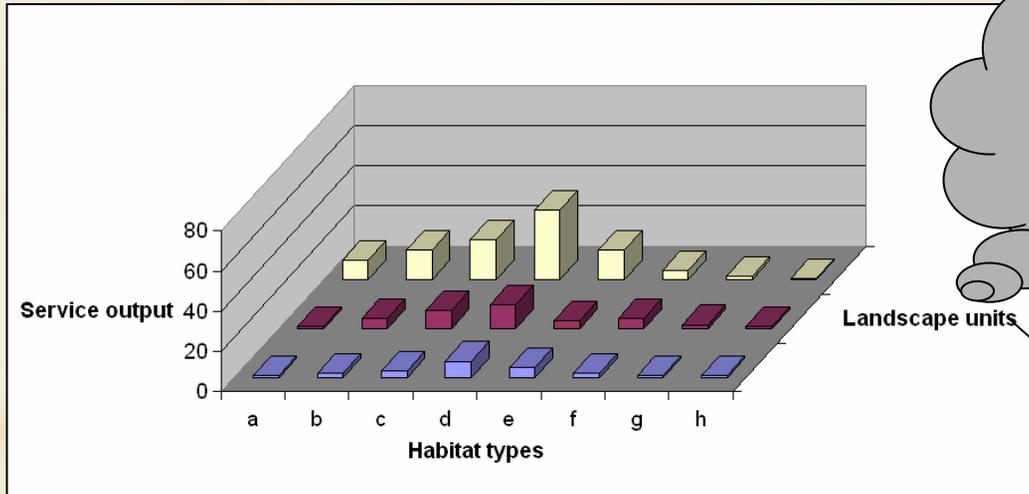
A habitats approach:

- *What are the key services associated with our major habitats?*
- **Biodiversity Action Plan habitats have 'policy relevance'**
- **Habitats approach allows us to consider multi-functionality and issues of 'win-win' and trade-offs more easily**
- **More abstract and more difficult to communicate messages...**

A services approach:

- *What are the key services and what are the systems that deliver them?*
- **Service focus is more relevant – because it deals with what people need and understand**
- **The service defines the system – many services depend on combinations of habitats**
- **But more difficult to deal with linkages between services if we get trapped in a sectoral approach (e.g. biodiversity vs recreation)**

A landscape approach



Decision making units.... *People make decisions about 'real places'*

Patches, districts, catchments, whole landscapes etc.

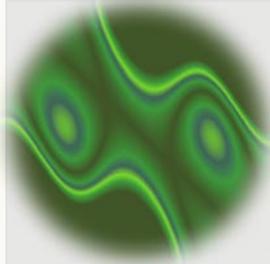
A landscape (ecological) approach allows us to step aside from the problems of an explicit habitats or services approach, and to ask questions such as:

- What are the services associated with this place that matter for sustainability and how are they generated?
- How important is each of these services, to whom, and for what reasons?
- What, if anything, could replace or substitute for each of the benefits, either here or elsewhere?
- Do we expect to have enough of each of these services either here or elsewhere in the future?
- What kinds of management actions are needed to protect or enhance these services?



Progress

- We have made some progress linking services to habitats and are reviewing robustness of evidence and information on trends....
- We are exploring how key services relate to different types of geographical unit (service unit) and whether a ‘geography of services’ can be constructed...
- We are looking at what types of tools or advice might be needed to help decision makers take account of ecosystem services in their work
- ... and we will be looking at how this can all fit into broader European initiatives, including a possible Europe-wide assessment for 2012



ecosystem
services

www.ecosystemservices.org.uk