

# The value of the New Forest to people

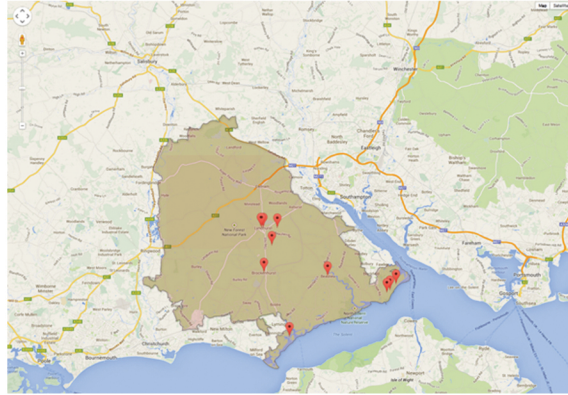
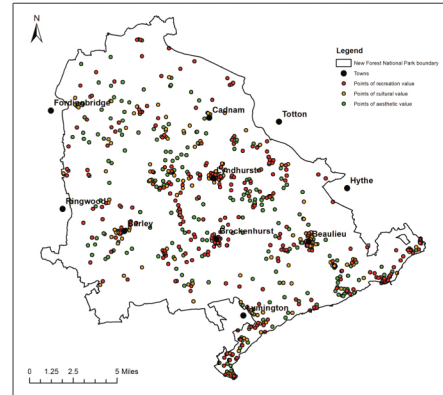
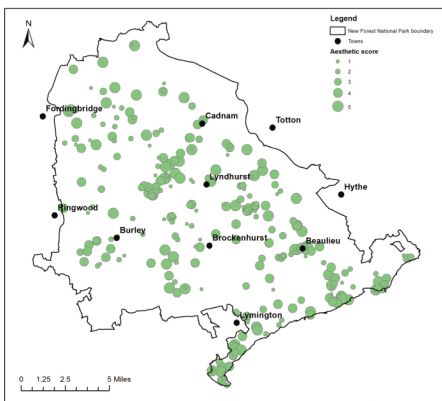


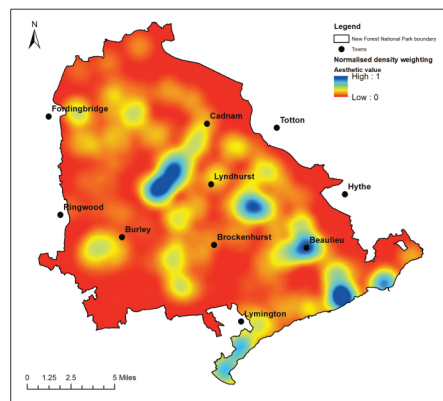
Illustration of the web-based mapping tool used for the participatory survey.  
Source: Gosal *et al.* (2016).



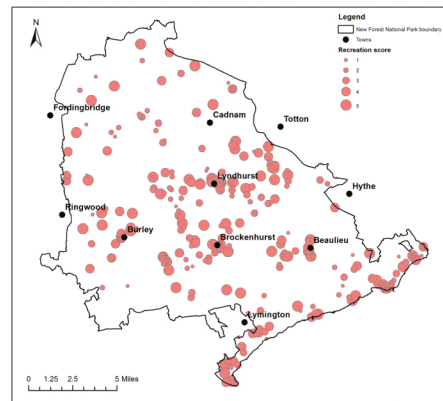
Locations that people selected in the on-line survey, as areas of particularly high value within the New Forest.  
Source: Gosal *et al.* (2016).



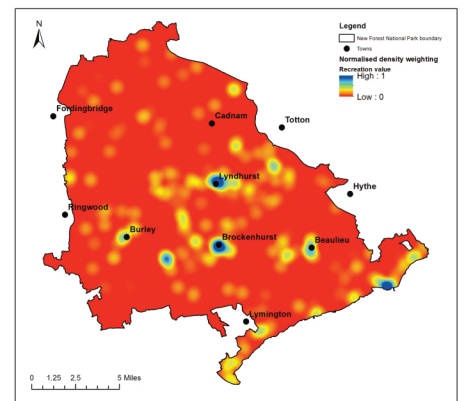
Locations that people selected in the on-line survey, as areas of particularly high aesthetic value within the New Forest.  
Source: Gosal *et al.* (2016).



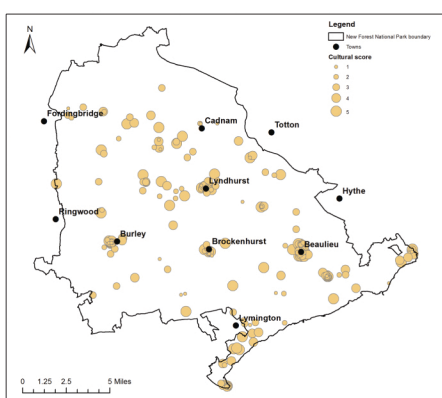
Kriged (or interpolated) map of aesthetic value within the New Forest.  
Source: Gosal *et al.* (2016).



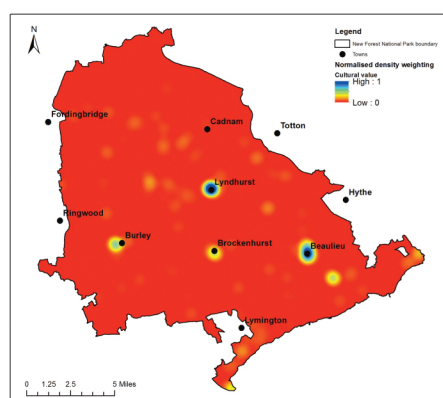
Locations that people selected in the on-line survey, as areas of particularly high recreation value within the New Forest.  
Source: Gosal *et al.* (2016).



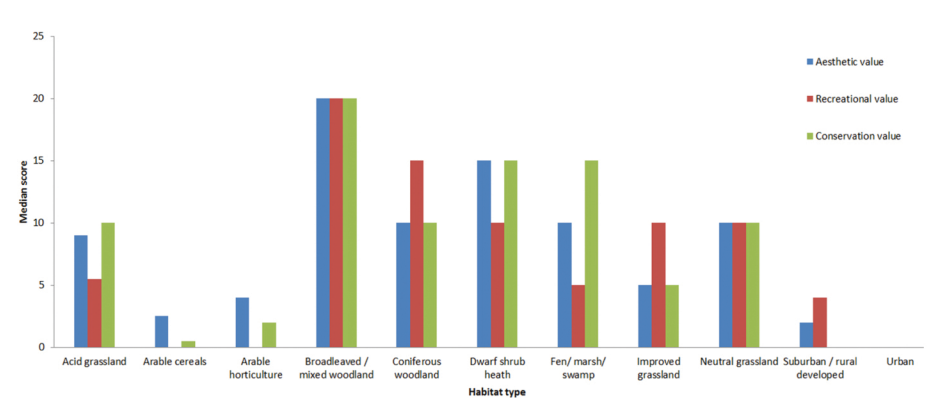
Kriged map of recreation value within the New Forest.  
Source: Gosal *et al.* (2016).



Locations that people selected in the on-line survey, as areas of particularly high cultural value within the New Forest.  
Source: Gosal *et al.* (2016).



Kriged map of cultural value within the New Forest.  
Source: Gosal *et al.* (2016).



Relative value of different habitats within the New Forest, as indicated by an on-line survey.  
Source: Gosal *et al.* (2016).

## How do people value the New Forest landscape?

One way of answering this question is to consider the benefits provided by ecosystems to people. These benefits are referred to as 'ecosystem services'. The assessment of such services has become a major research area in recent years, and the concept has been widely incorporated into environmental policy.

One of the most useful ways to assess ecosystem services is to map them, enabling their variation to be visualised at the landscape scale. Maps of ecosystem services can potentially inform land planning and management, by enabling areas of particularly high value to be identified.

Various different categories of ecosystem service have been identified. These include:

- *Provisioning services*, such as food, freshwater, timber and fuelwood
- *Regulating services*, such as regulation of climate, flood risk and water quality
- *Supporting services*, such as biodiversity, soil formation and nutrient cycling
- *Cultural services*, such as aesthetic value and recreation.

Typically, information is most lacking for cultural services, because these are hardest to assess. Another key issue is deciding whom to consult. Many assessments of ecosystem services fail to

consider the views of local people, who live in and use a particular area. Often, local people will value particular areas within a landscape, but such values are often not recognised by formal planning processes.

To address this problem, we developed a web-based survey tool, based around Google Maps. Local people, living in or near the New Forest, were invited to complete a questionnaire presented on this website. In addition, they were invited to place 'pins' into a satellite image of the study area to highlight locations of particular cultural, aesthetic and recreational value. Each pin was also accorded a score, on a scale of 1-5 (1 being the most important, 5 being the least). In this way, we were able to build up a picture of which parts of the New Forest are considered most valuable to the people that live there.

Results indicated that some parts of the New Forest have higher value than others. For example, in the case of aesthetic value, there were 'hotspots' of particularly high value in Keyhaven, Ridley Plain, around Beaulieu, the mouth of the Beaulieu river, and at Lepe. Some of these areas were also of relatively high value for recreation, but other preferred areas for recreation were also identified, such as along the coast and around Lyndhurst and Brockenhurst. These include many of the areas of extensive woodland and heathland. Areas of high cultural value, by contrast, were focused on the towns, particularly Lyndhurst and Beaulieu.

When respondents were asked about the values of different habitats, broadleaved woodland was identified as the most valuable of the habitats present in the New Forest, both for aesthetic and recreation value, and also for conservation value.

