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Mapping Australia's Ocean Wealth: integrating ecosystem services into coastal decision-making

Key words: Saltmarsh, Seagrass, Mangrove

Abstract:

Decision makers largely accept the notion that nature can play a role in achieving development objectives. However, to truly integrate natural systems into sectoral development decision-making, we need to understand the benefits that humans derive from nature. As such, we must translate the benefits to human society, from nature, into a language understood by all sectors. To achieve this, we need to know where these benefits occur and what drives the value of the benefits, so that we can understand their worth both temporally and spatially. We also need to know how the value derived from ecosystem services, compares to costs and benefits from alternative human activities.

The Nature Conservancy and Deakin University have partnered with government agencies and private sector business in an ambitious new program to quantify, value and map ecosystem services for saltmarsh, mangrove and seagrass habitats in south eastern Australia. *Mapping Ocean Wealth* uses a three stage process of Review-Model-Map to translate ecosystem services into decision support tools and a language understood by business, community and government. The application of *Mapping Ocean Wealth* includes environmental reporting, planning, benefit-cost analysis and development of financial programs aimed at supporting coastal protection and restoration. The *Mapping Ocean Wealth* project ultimately aims to support local, coastal decision-making and this presentation will describe the process, value chain and outcomes of *Mapping Ocean Wealth.*