

Manawatu Estuary Ramsar Site Intro

satmap view, high tide, Sept. 2025

0) Definitions

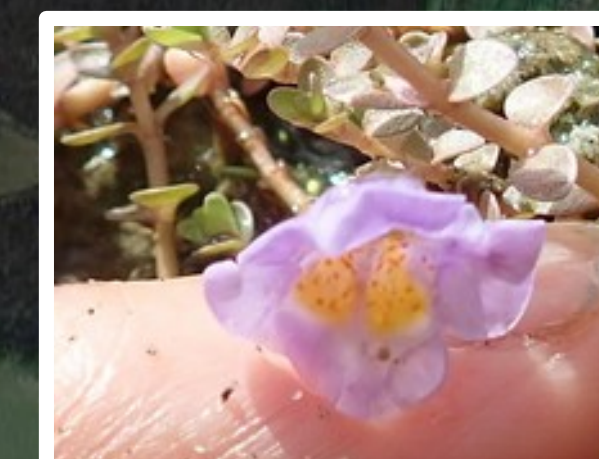
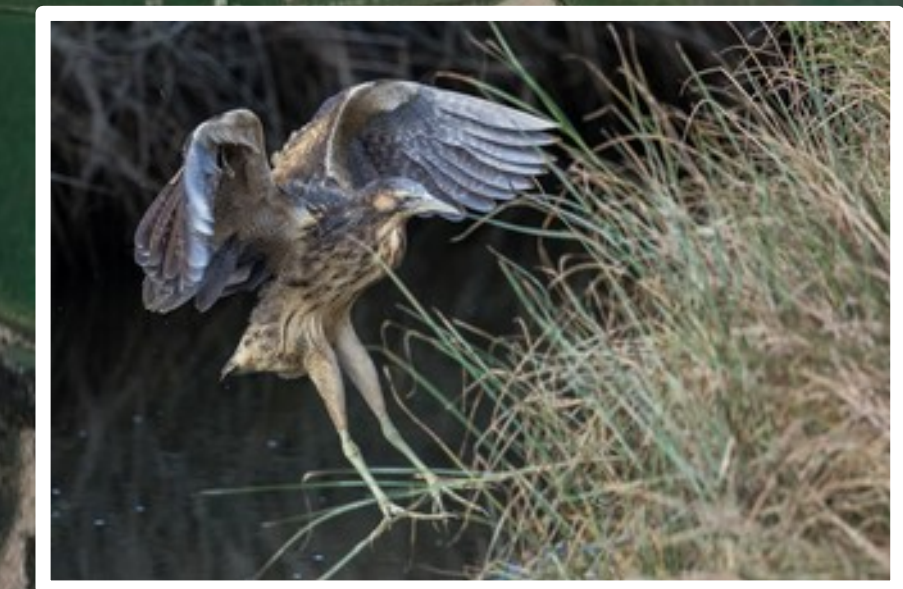
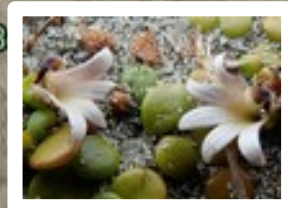
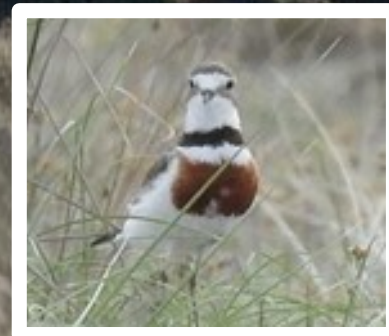
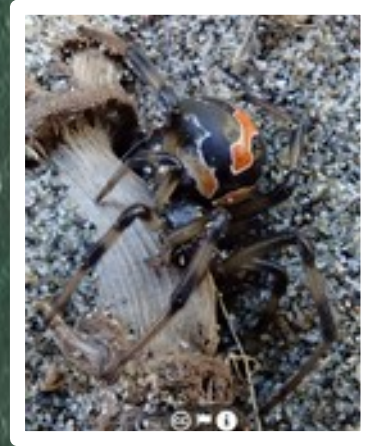
1) Ramsar site: - what, why, how

2) Birds as the high profile face of this Ramsar site

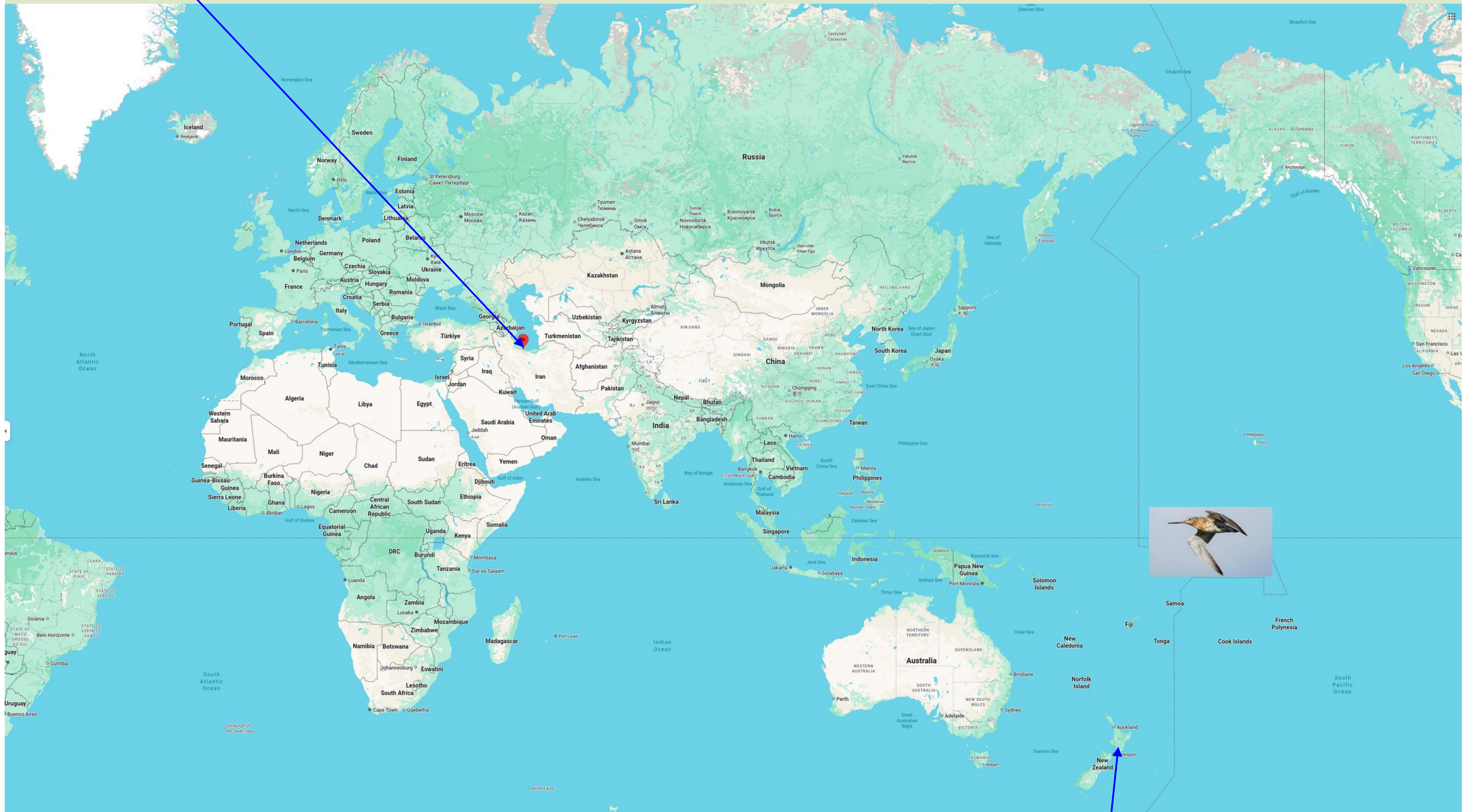
3) Threatened species in this Ramsar site

4) How can *you* help us?

5) Bibliography/Links



Ramsar is a small city in Iran, on the Caspian Sea



What's the connection to the Manawatu estuary?

The Convention on Wetlands is the intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

The Convention was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971 and came into force in 1975. Since then, almost 90% of UN member states, from all the world’s geographic regions, have acceded to become “Contracting Parties”.



Number of contracting parties:
172



Number of wetlands:
2.546



Total surface of designated sites:
257.994.728 ha

In your country

New Zealand



Since
1976

Ramsar sites
7

Surface area of
67.586 ha

New Zealand Wetlands of International Importance

New Zealand has listed seven sites covering almost 68,000 hectares for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites). They are:

- [Whangamarino, Waikato](#)
- [Kopuatai Peat Dome, Waikato](#)
- [Firth of Thames, Waikato](#)
- [Manawatu River Estuary, Manawatu](#)
- [Wairarapa Moana, Wairarapa](#)
- [Farewell Spit, Nelson](#)
- [Awarua Wetland/Waituna Lagoon, Southland](#)

[More about these New Zealand Ramsar sites from Ramsar](#) .

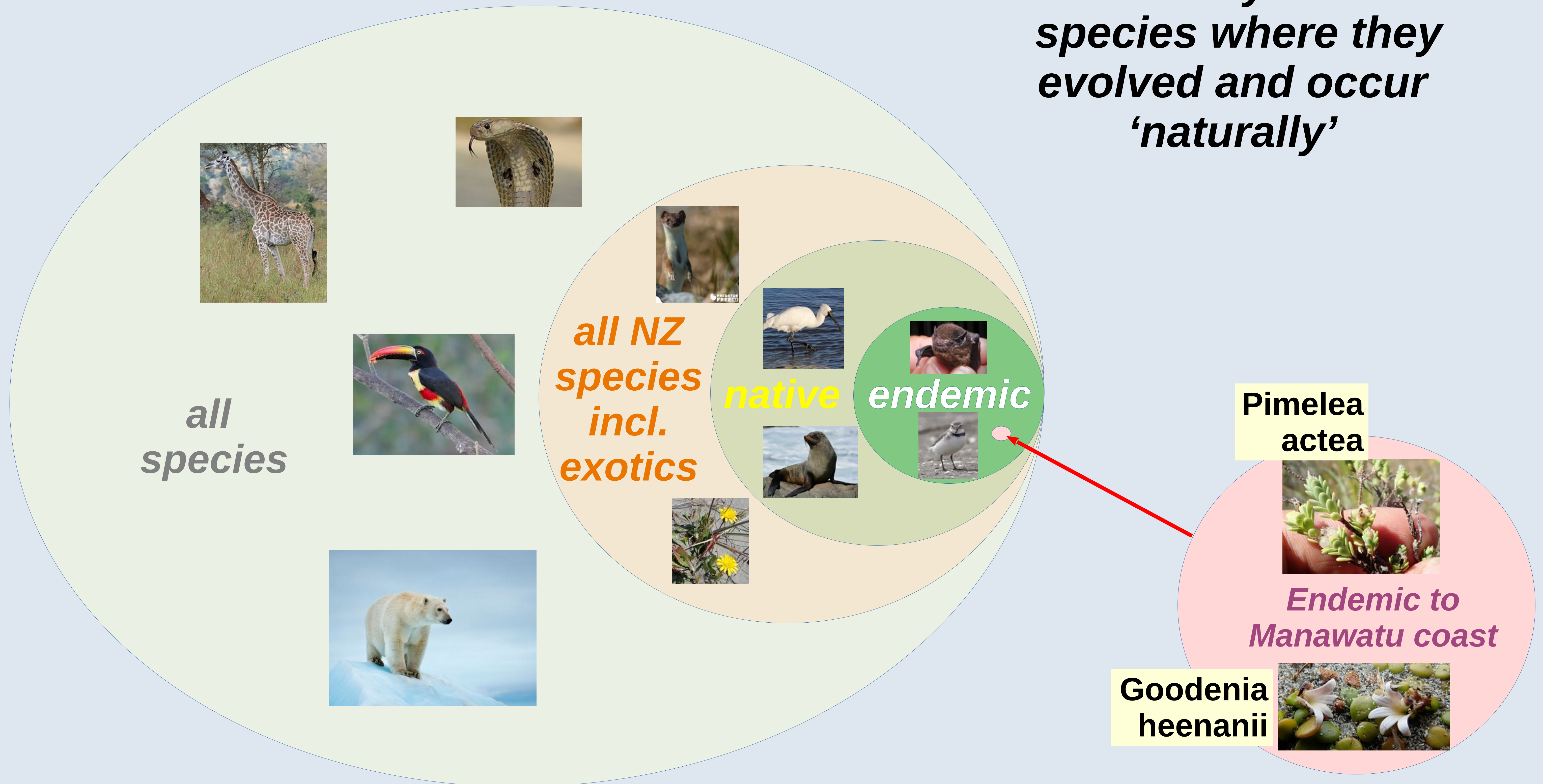
Wetlands selected for the list are internationally significant in terms of ecology, botany, zoology, limnology or hydrology. They also must meet criteria outlined in the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

Nominations for the List can be generated by agencies or individuals. DOC, as New Zealand's administering authority, is required to provide advice to the Minister of Conservation on the suitability of any proposed Ramsar site nomination.

DOC can provide further advice on procedures for nominating sites for listing wetlands of international importance.

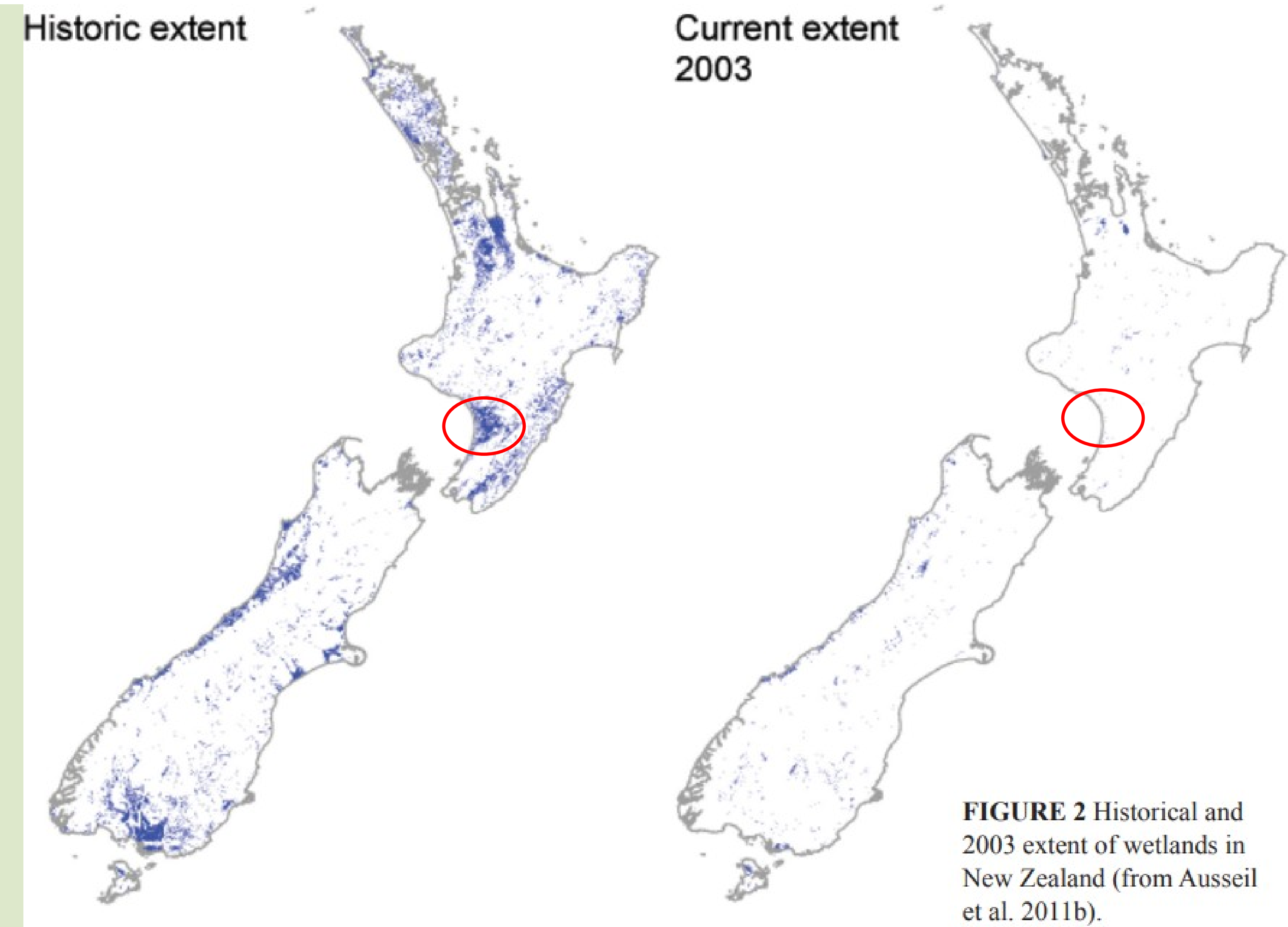
Definitions:

***Biodiversity is about
species where they
evolved and occur
'naturally'***



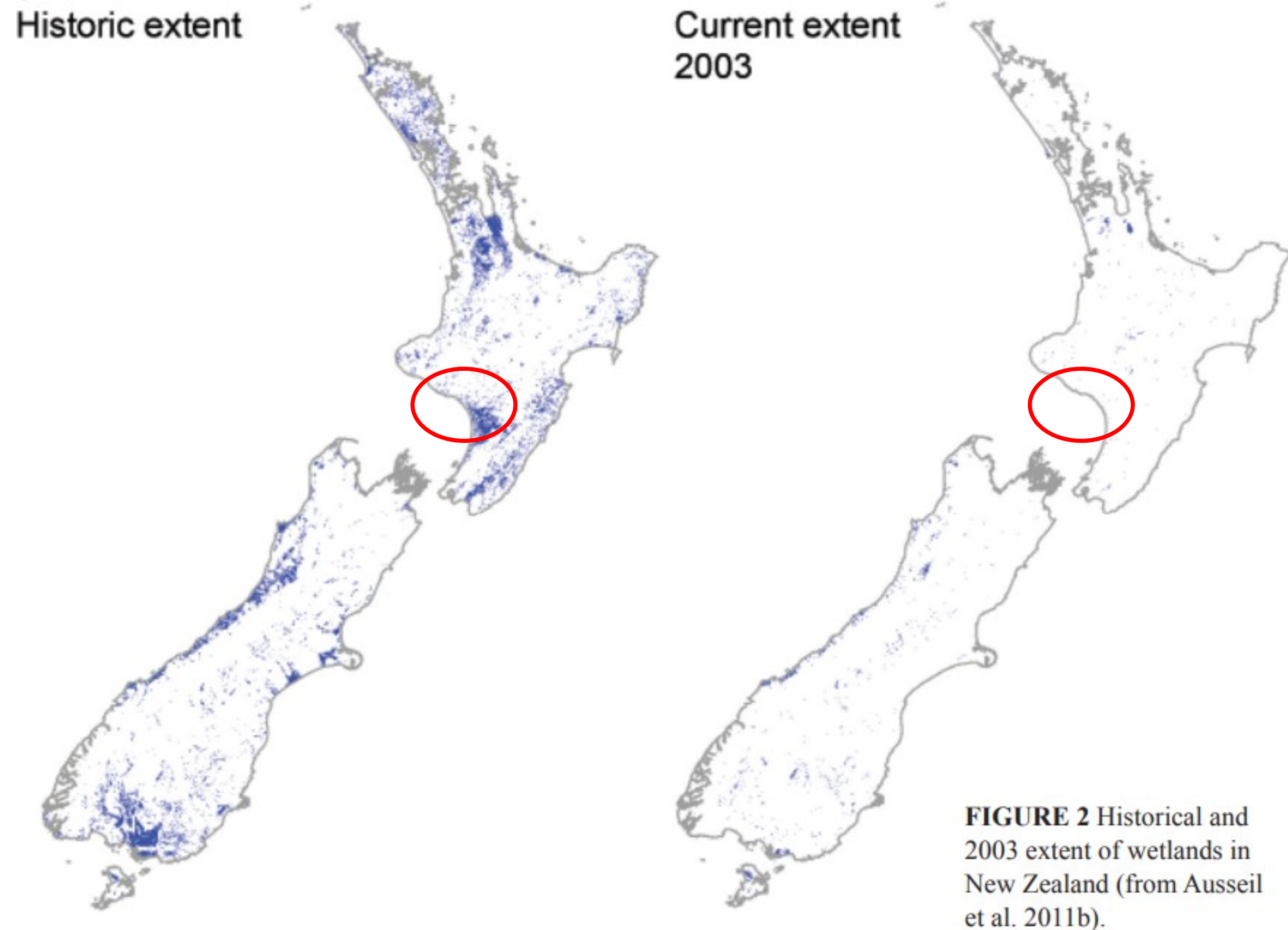
Key Facts on Biodiversity

- More than 75% of global food crops rely on pollinators, contributing US\$ 235–577 billion annually to global agricultural output. Species: birds, bees, wasps, thrips, other insects, small mammals....
- Over 50% of modern medicines are derived from natural sources. Many more are synthetics derived from nature's examples
- Forests store 80% of terrestrial biodiversity, absorbing approximately 2.6 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide annually, helping mitigate climate change. Wetlands are 3% of Aotearoa's land area, harbour 25% of native species, and are significantly more effective carbon sinks than forest.
- Invasive alien species (aka exotics) contribute to 60% of species extinctions, causing US\$ 423 billion in global economic damage each year.
- Healthy ecosystems provide 75% of global freshwater resources, with wetlands playing a key role in water purification. However, since 1970, 35% of wetlands have been lost.



Further losses predicted for wetlands in future

An international report, led by a DOC scientist, warns the world is on track to lose even more of its wetlands – but solutions exist.



Wetlands offer unparalleled benefits to biodiversity, the climate, water resources and human health. They regulate floods, store carbon, purify water and support food security for billions of people.

When managed effectively, the remaining 1.4 billion hectares of wetlands deliver ecosystem services worth up to \$39 trillion annually — more than any other type of ecosystem. Investing in wetlands is investing in our shared future.

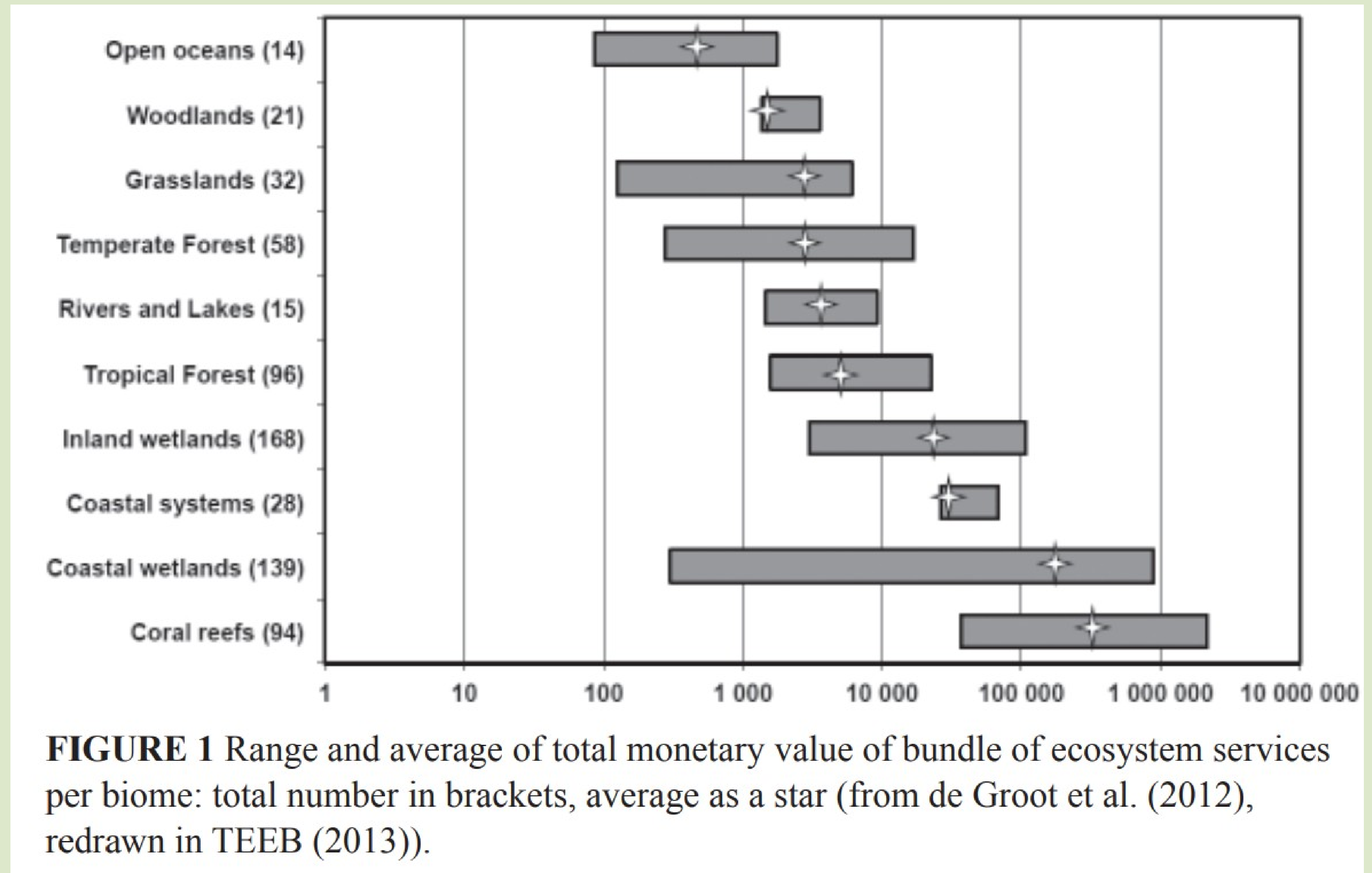


GLOBAL WETLAND OUTLOOK 2025

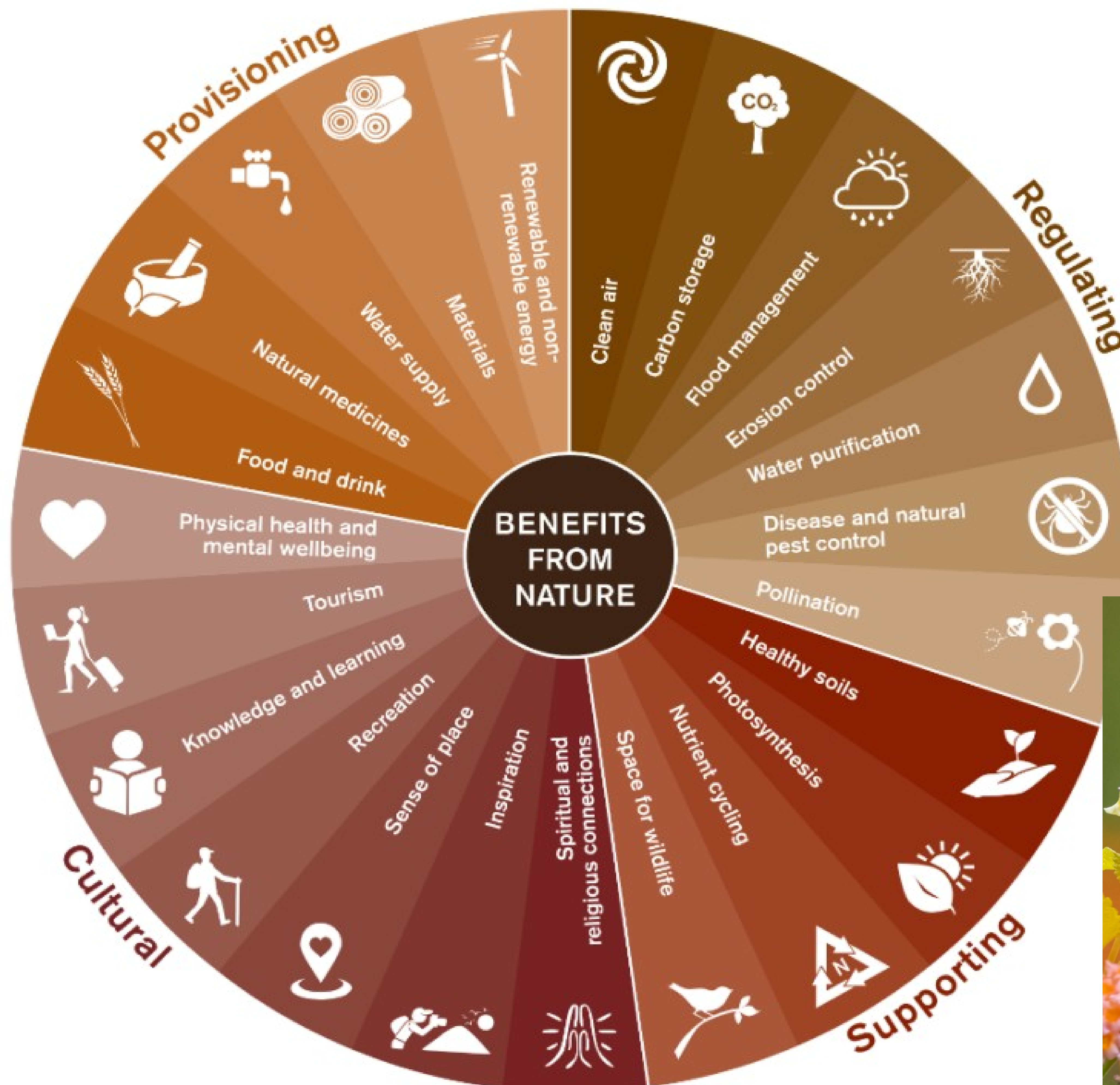


Valuing, conserving,
restoring and
financing wetlands

Despite covering only 1.5% of the Earth's surface, wetlands provide a disproportionately high 40% of global ecosystem services (Zedler and Kercher 2005)



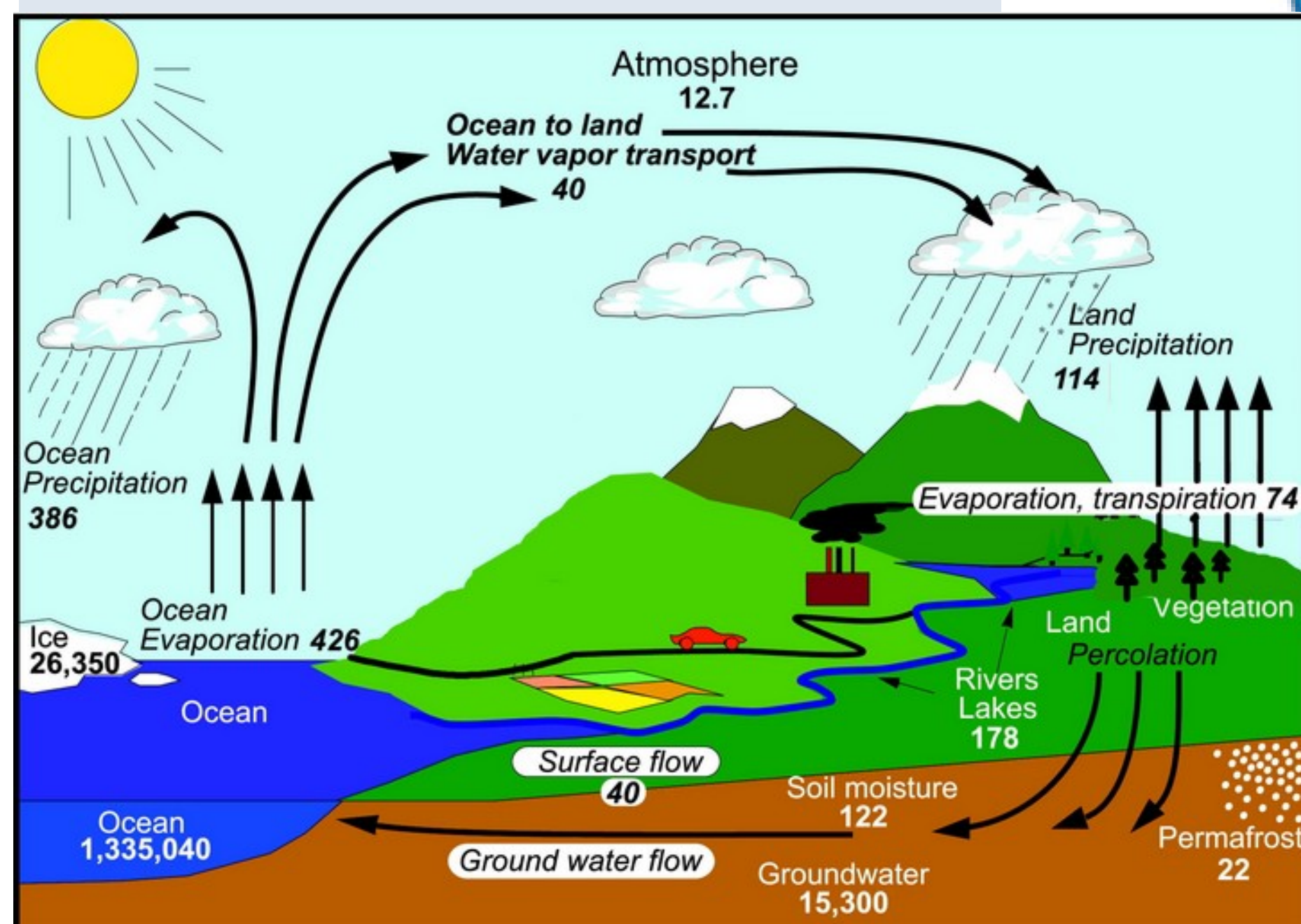
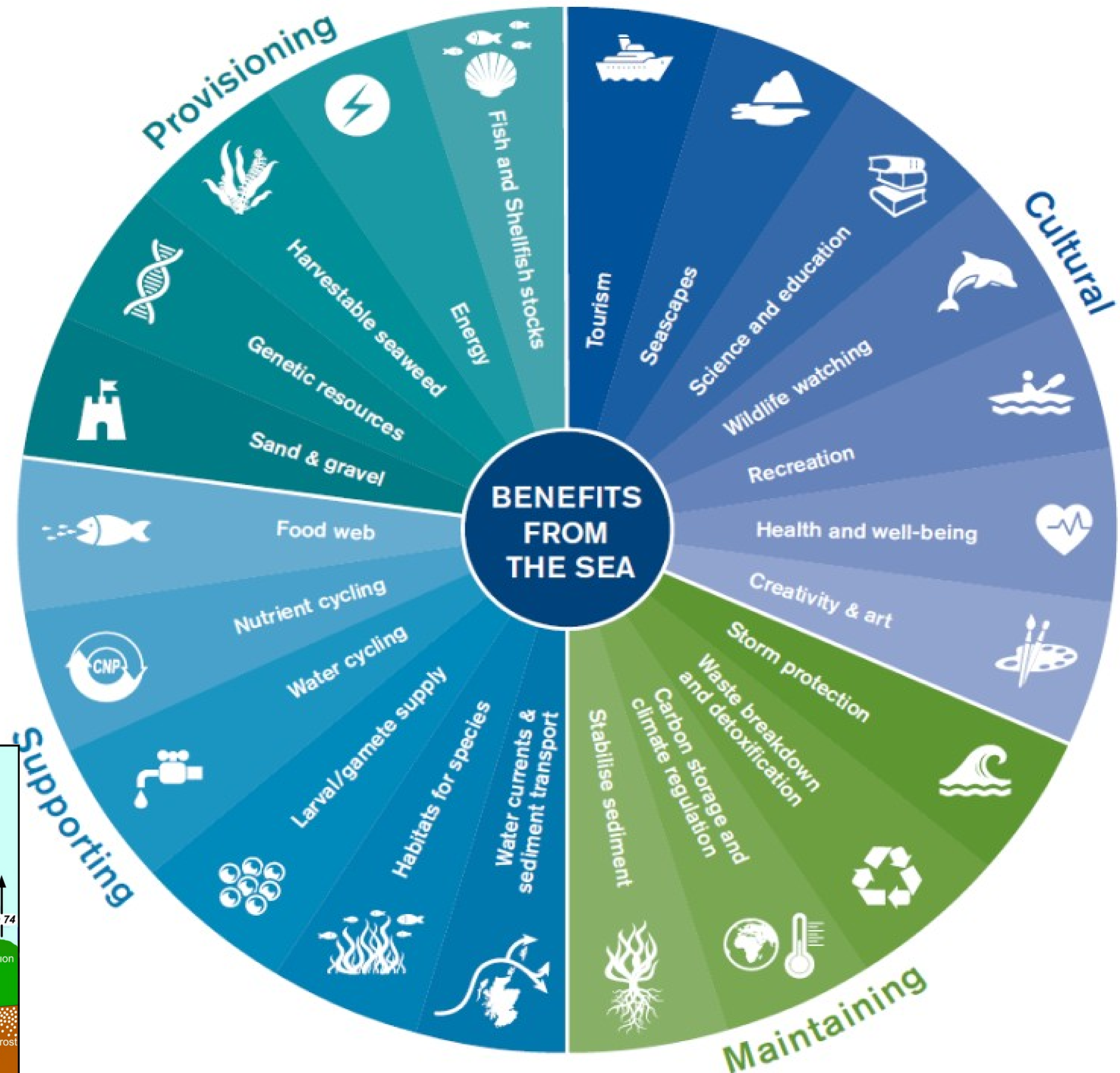
So, what are ecosystem services then?



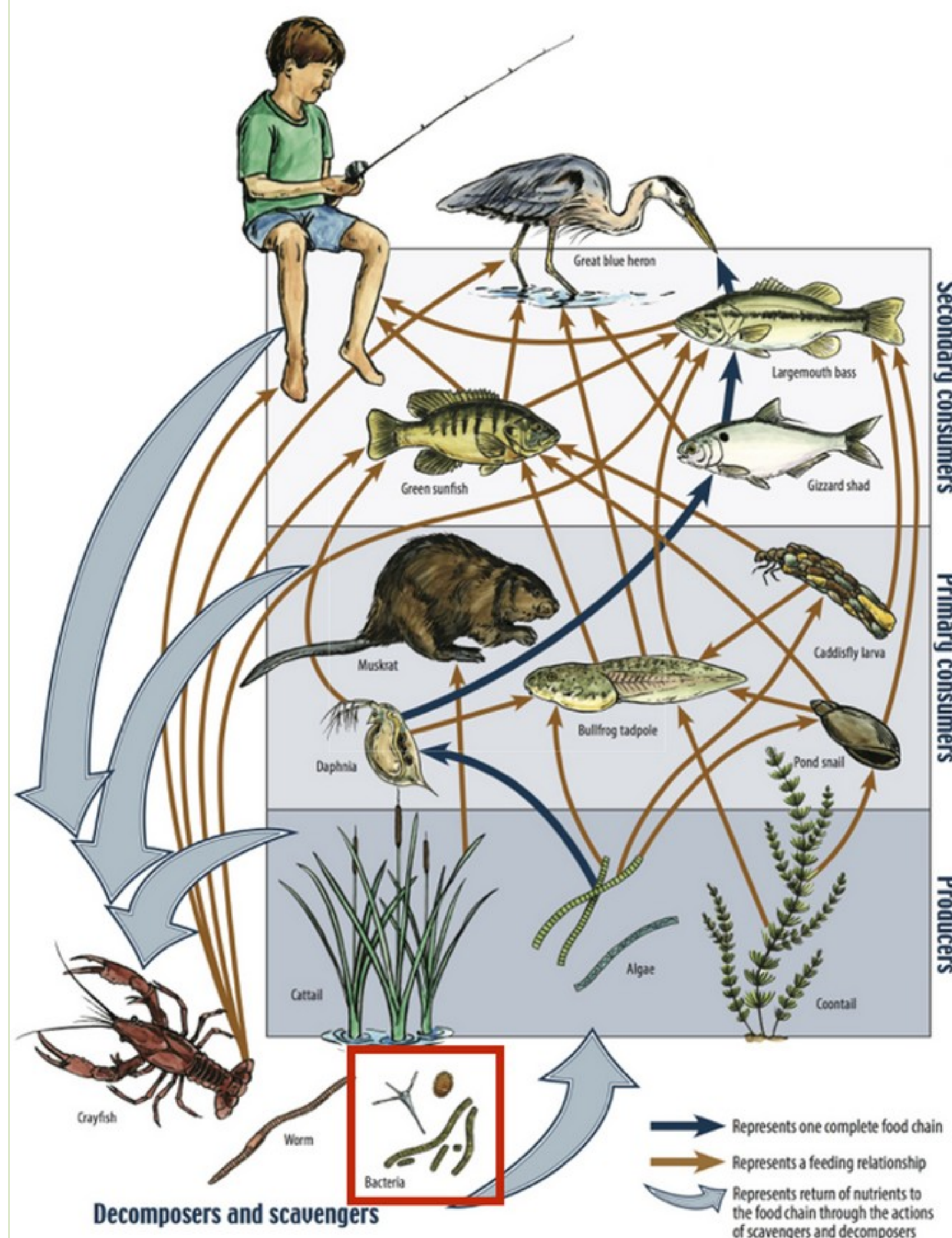
terrestrial ecosystem services



marine ecosystem services



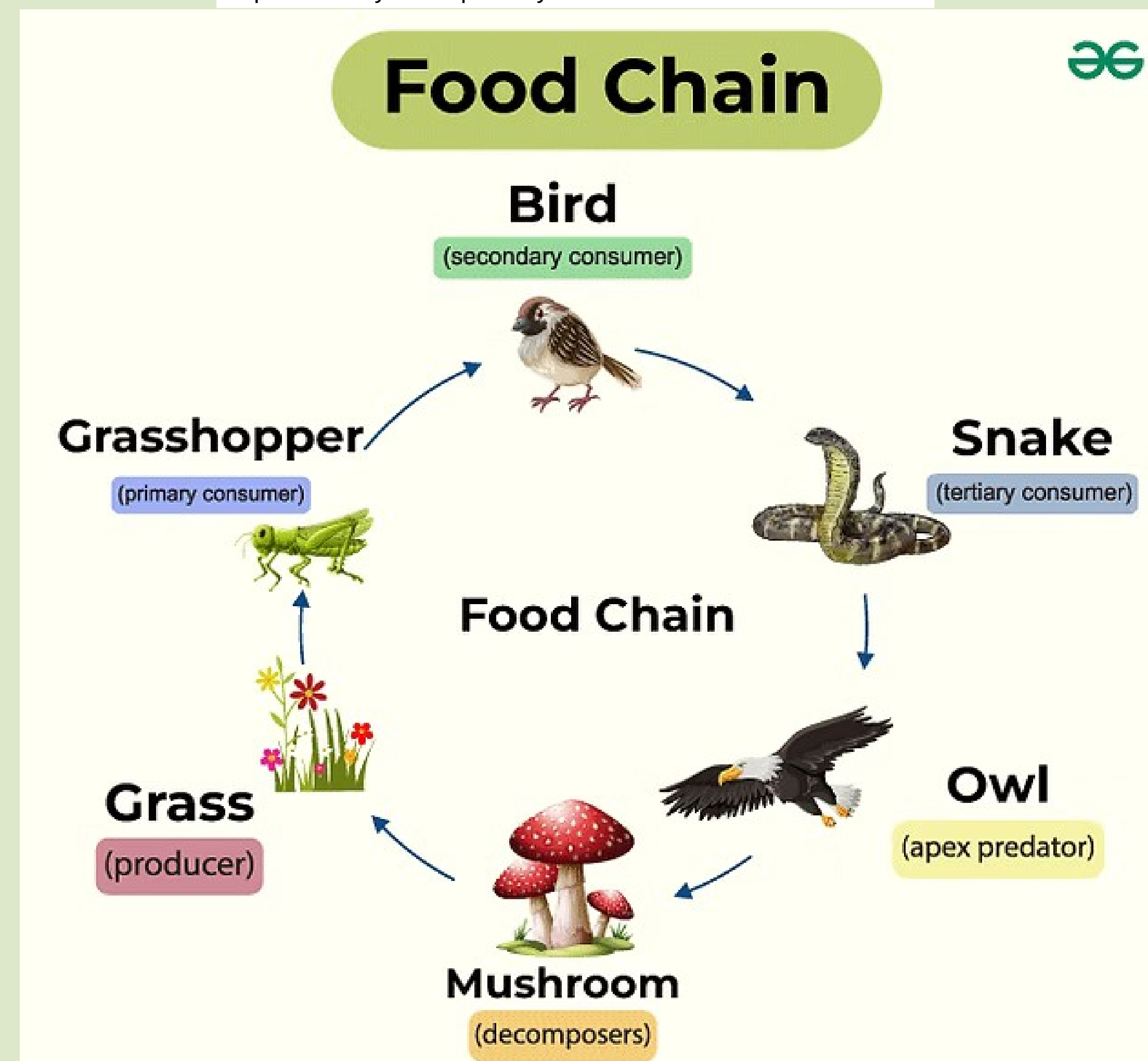
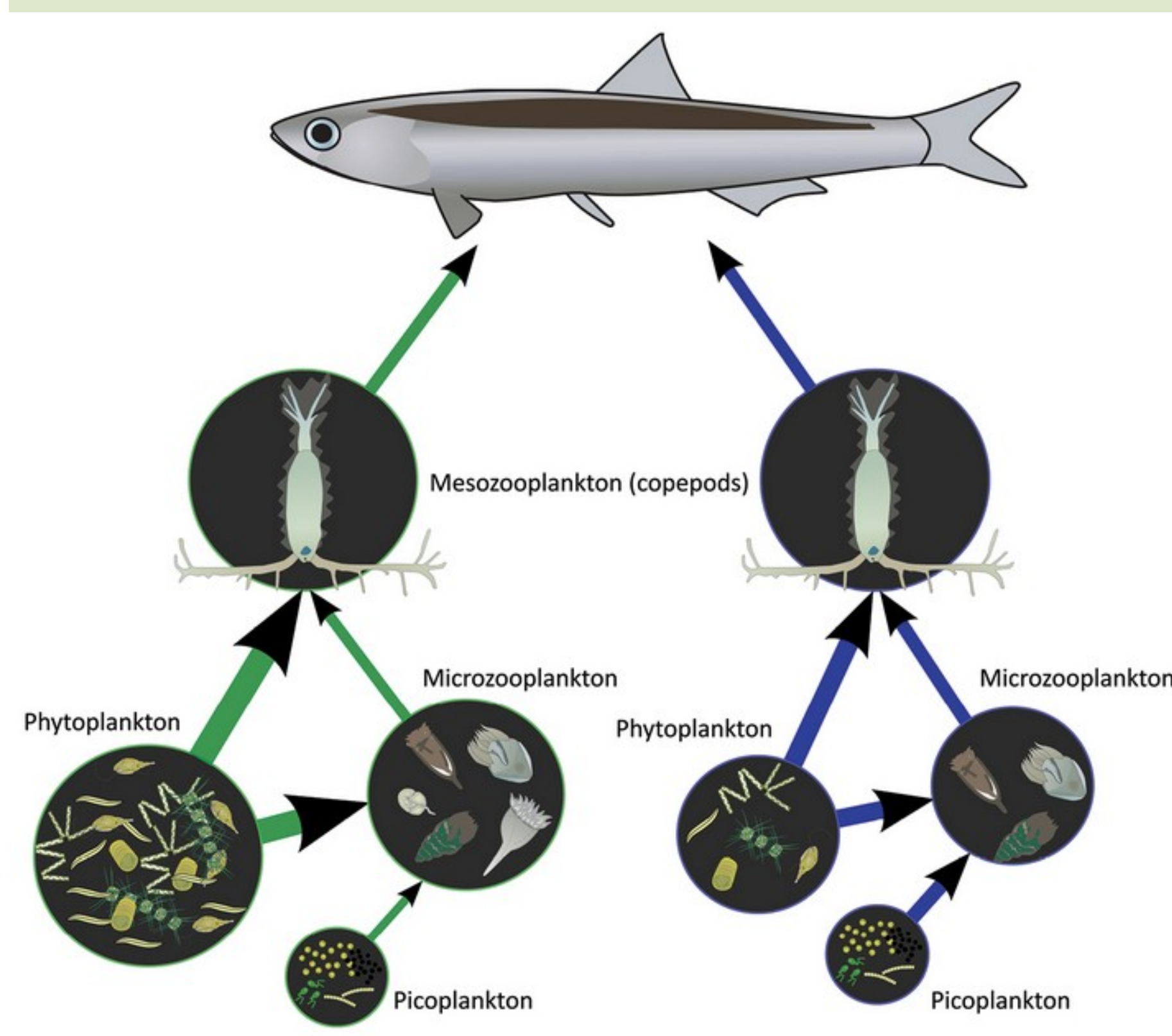
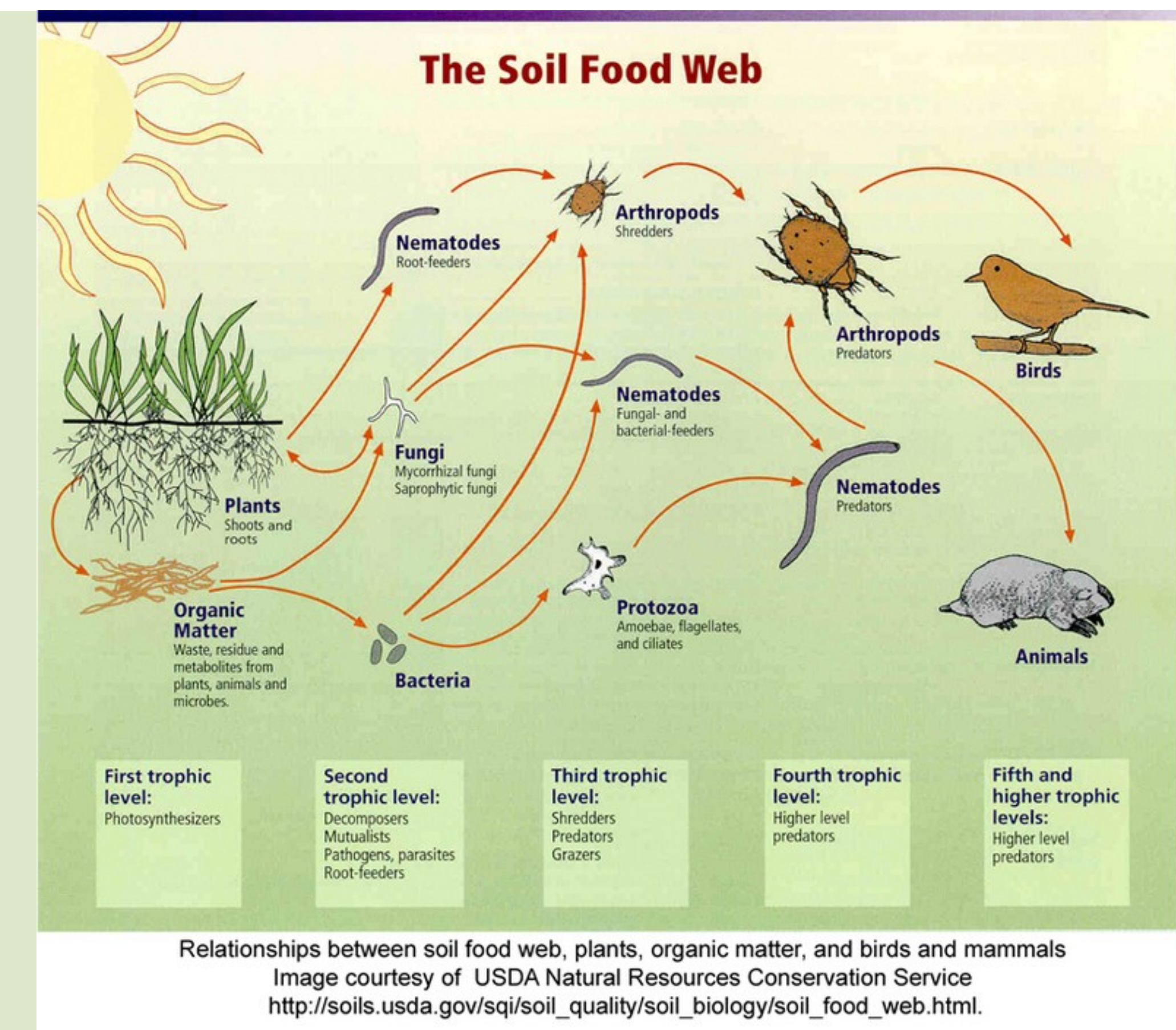
Units: Thousand cubic km for storage, and thousand cubic km/yr for exchanges *1990s



The web of life has many names and high complexity, including symbiosis, cannibalism, parasitism, etc.

Humanity is inextricably interwoven into that complexity

<https://www.uyir.at/explore/ayana-ashok/food-chains-food-webs>

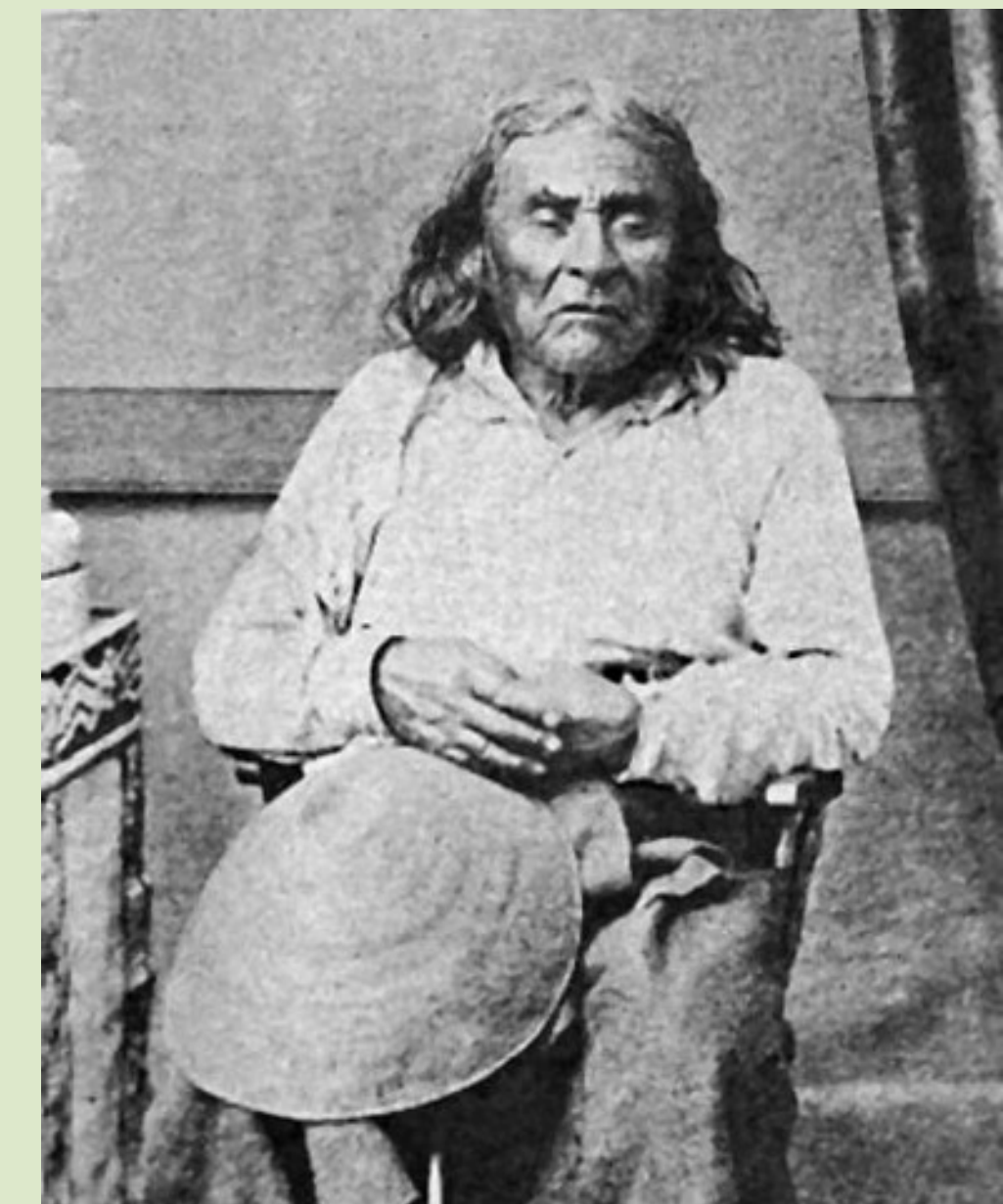


<https://earthhow.com/food-chain-predators-herbivores-producers-decomposers/>

Biodiversity + ecosystem services are essential to the entire web of life. Mankind is an integral part of this web, so conserving the web of life is essential to human life

Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect.

Chief Seattle



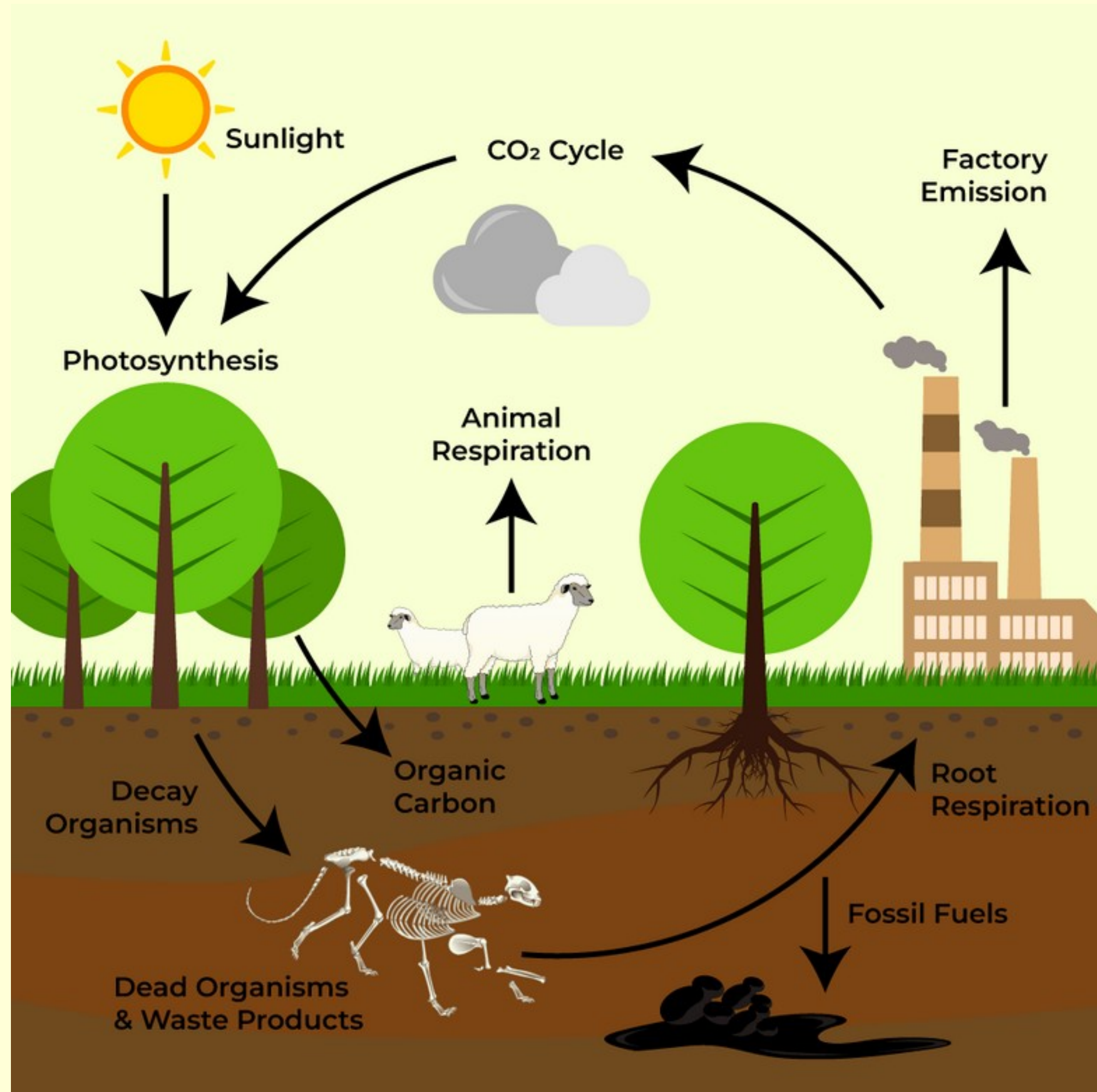
<https://millstonenews.com/humans-one-thread-in-the-web-of-life/>

The evidence is clear: wetlands are the highest priority to conserve for planetary sustainability

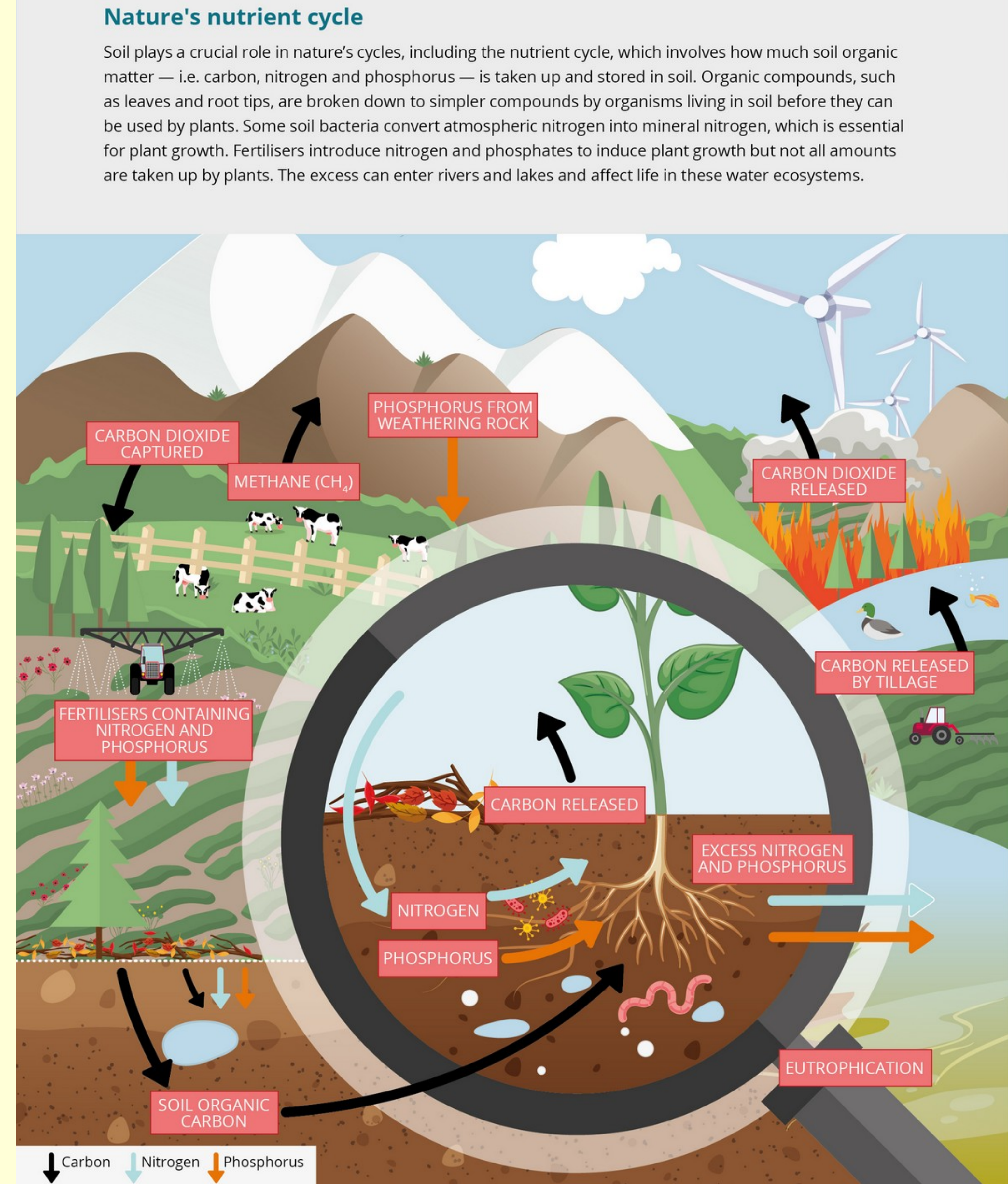
That covers a lot of definitions. The following slides are depressing, indicating we must be more proactive than we are. Fasten your seatbelt, it's a rough ride.



The carbon cycle and mankind's impact on the generation of CO₂ forms part of the global balance.



Note also the relation to water quality!

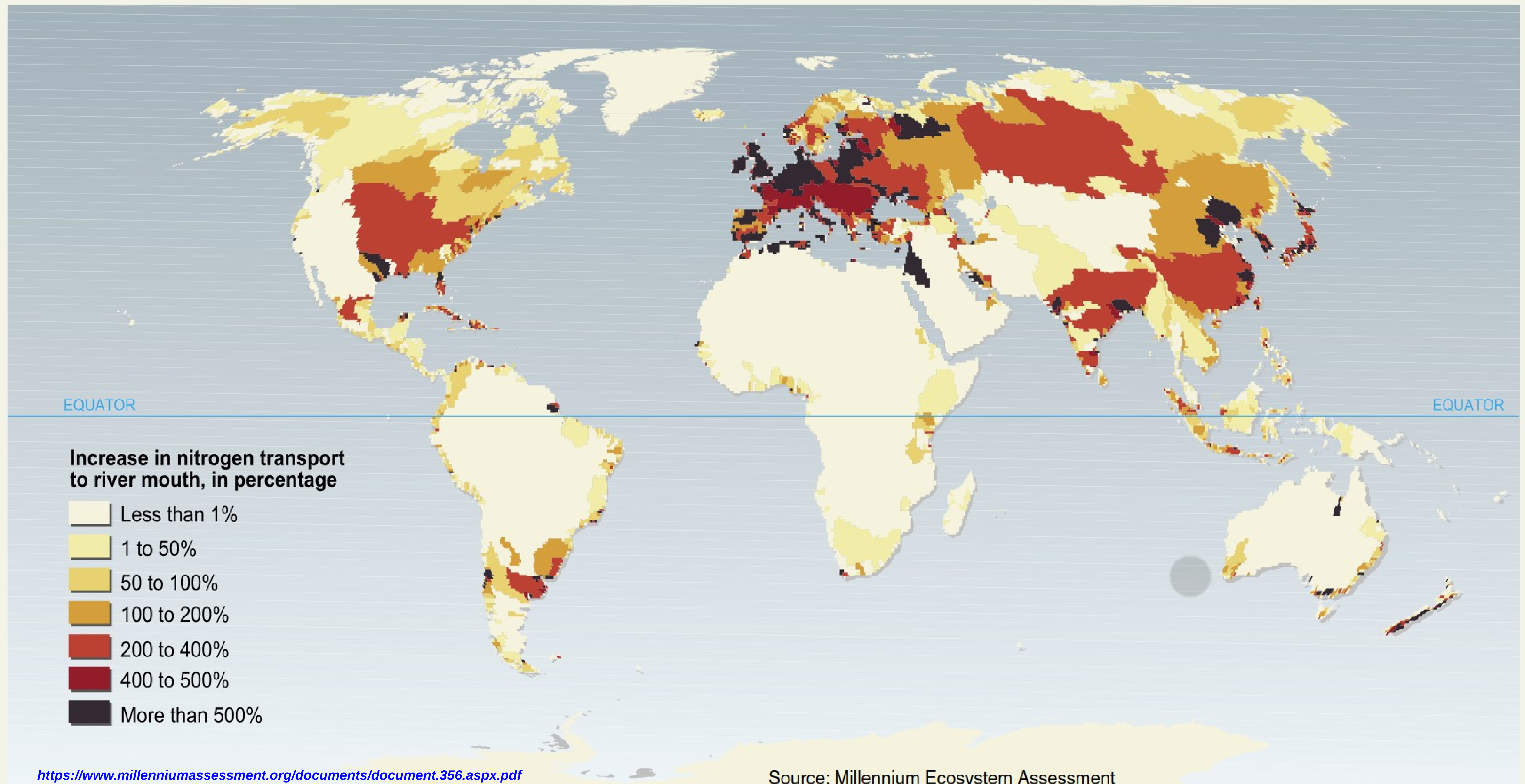


Source: EEA Signals 2019.

<https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/maps-and-charts/agriculture>

Appendix Figure A.9. CONTRAST BETWEEN CONTEMPORARY AND PRE-DISTURBANCE TRANSPORTS OF TOTAL NITROGEN THROUGH INLAND AQUATIC SYSTEMS RESULTING FROM ANTHROPOGENIC ACCELERATION OF THIS NUTRIENT CYCLE (C7 Fig 7.5)

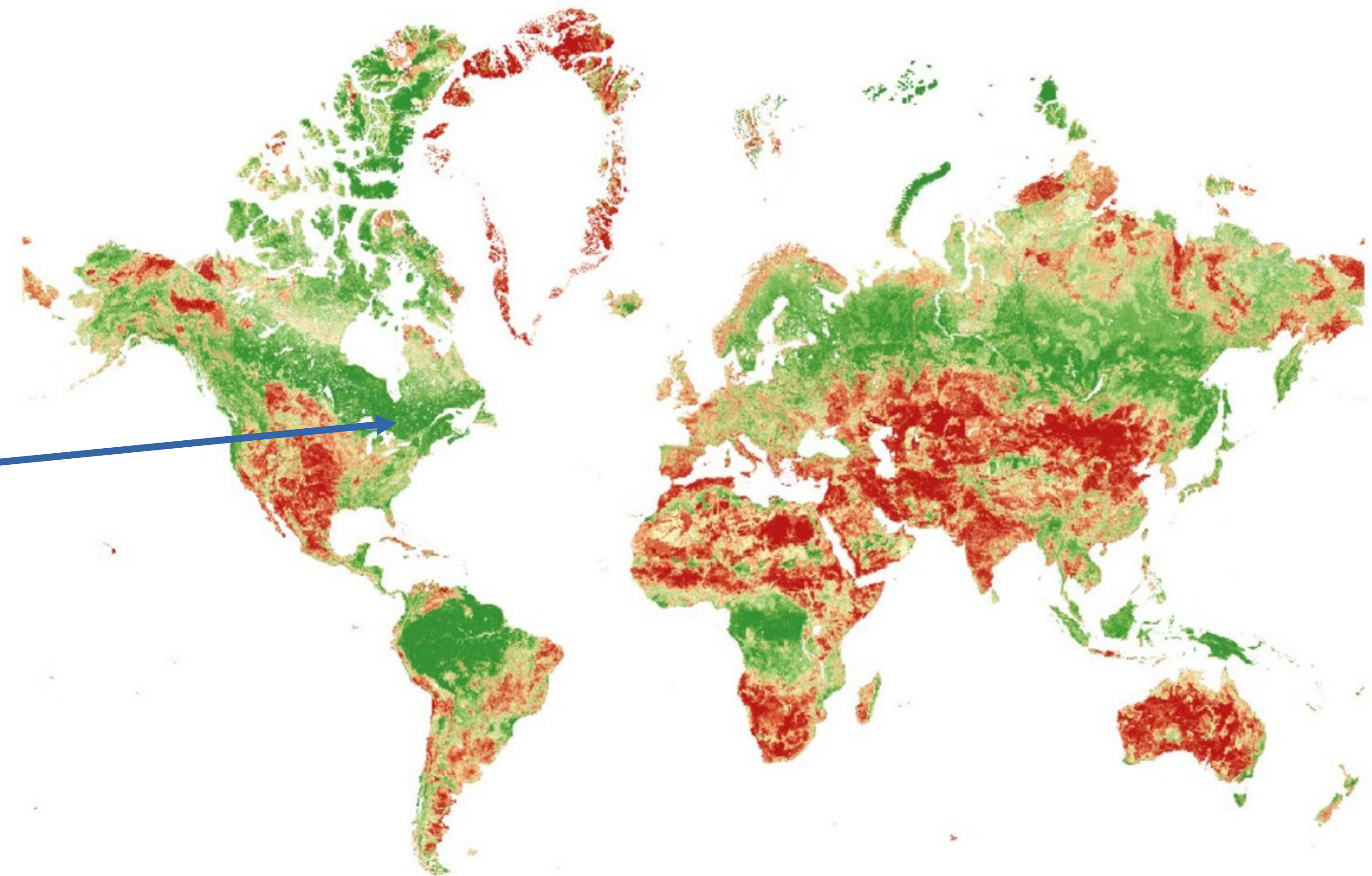
While the peculiarities of individual pollutants, rivers, and governance define the specific character of water pollution, the general patterns observed for nitrogen are representative of anthropogenic changes to the transport of waterborne constituents. Elevated contemporary loadings to one part of the system (such as croplands) often reverberate to other parts of the system (to coastal zones, for example), exceeding the capacity of natural systems to assimilate additional constituents.



The Swiss Re index is built on 10 key ecosystem services identified by the world's scientists and uses scientific data to map the state of these services at a resolution of one square kilometre across the world's land. The services include provision of clean water and air, food, timber, pollination, fertile soil, erosion control, and coastal protection, as well as a measure of habitat intactness.

**Big green patch,
but life is not
easy there. I
was born there.**

Global SRI BES Index map at 1 km² resolution

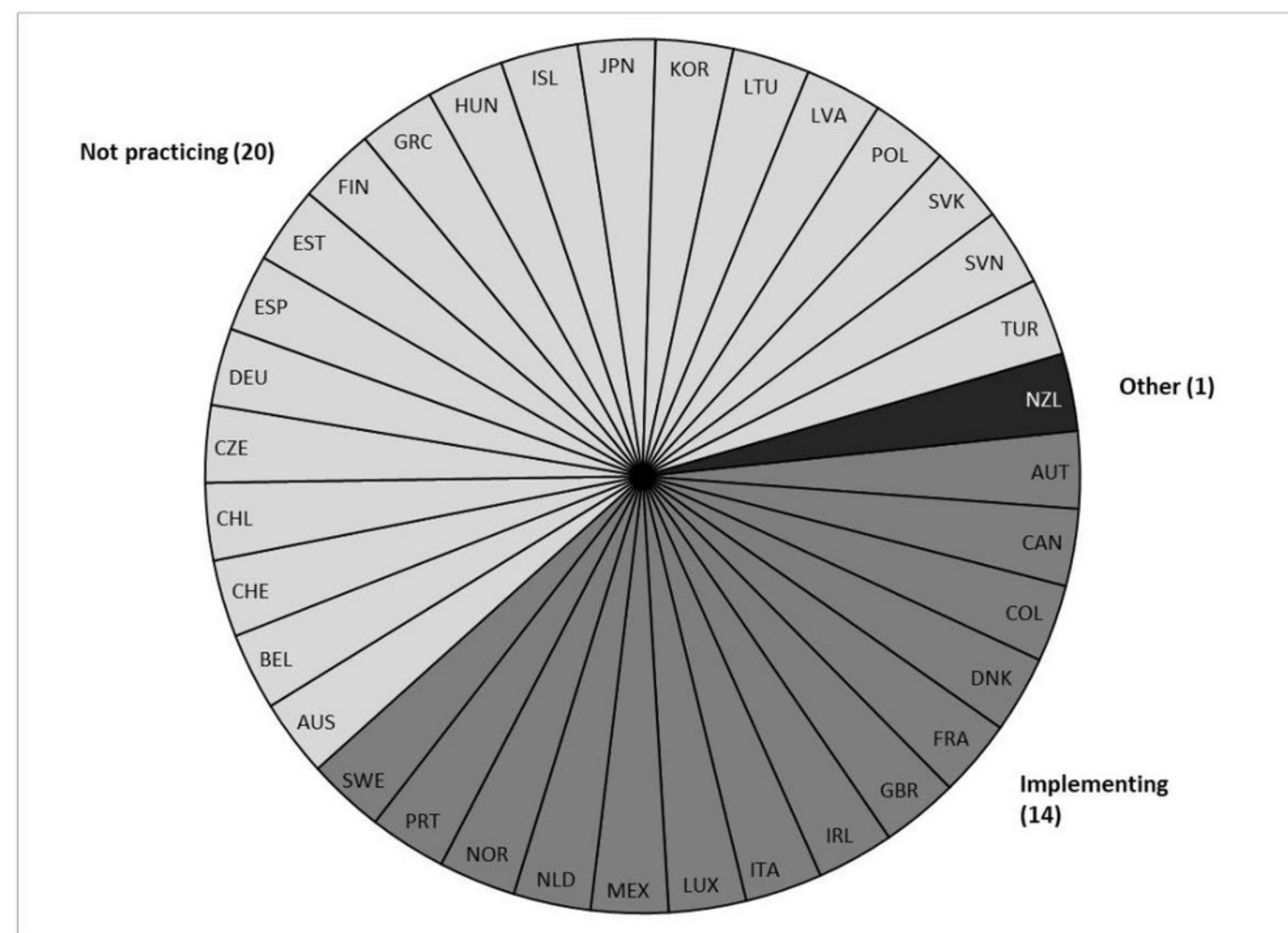


Biodiversity & Ecosystem Services (BES) Index



Source: Swiss Re Institute and multiple data sources

Figure 2.1. Status of Green Budgeting in OECD countries



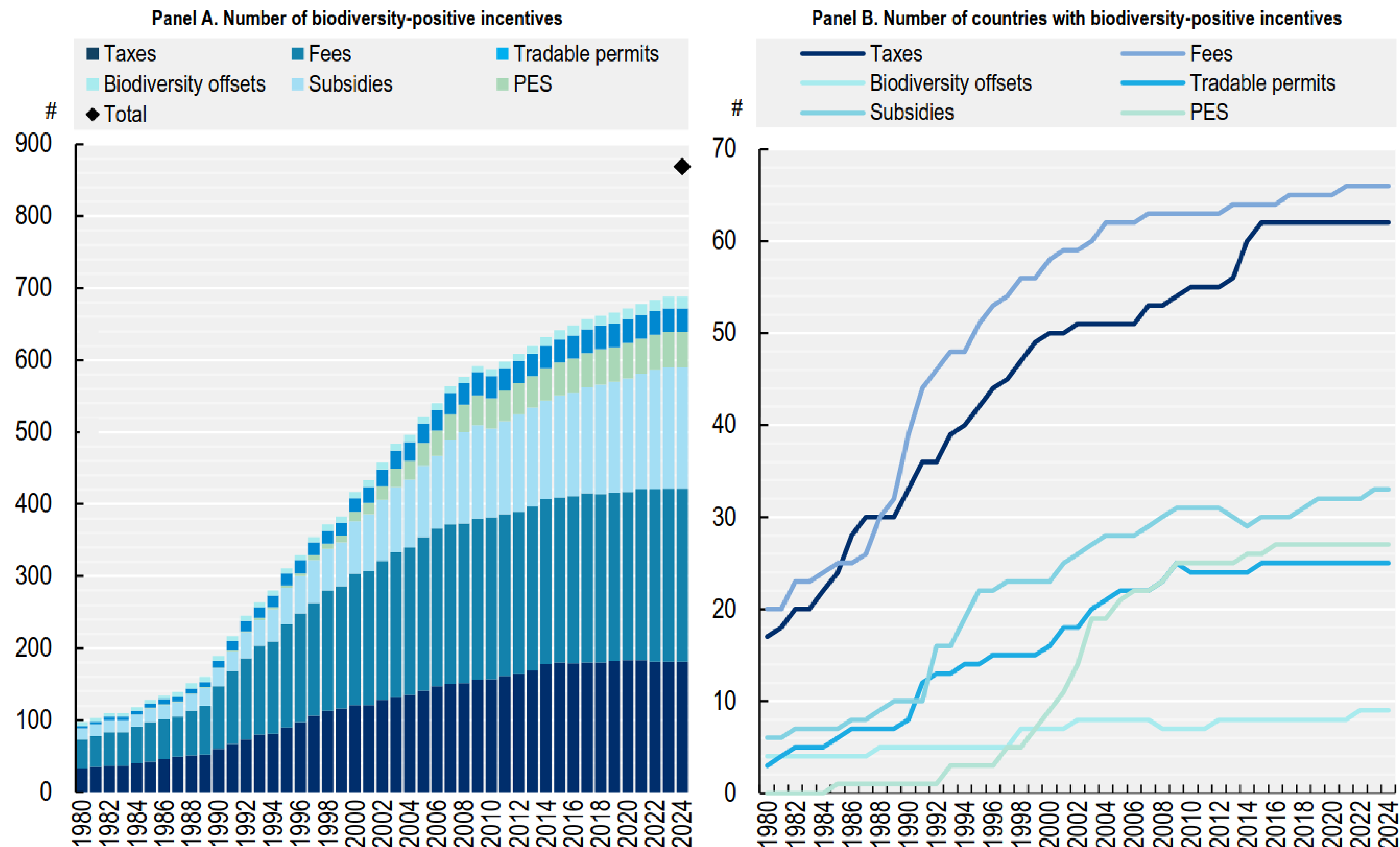
Note: Data not available for Israel and the United States. New Zealand practices "Wellbeing budgeting" where the Environment is categorised as a natural capital as part of the country's wellbeing approach.

https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2021/08/green-budgeting-in-oecd-countries_01618d8b/acf5d047-en.pdf

**Does that cover *‘Why’*?
Questions?**

At this point, we're desperate for good news. Here's something....

Figure 1.1. Trends in the use of biodiversity-positive incentives



Note: Panel A: An additional 46 taxes, 61 fees, 1 biodiversity offset, 1 tradable permit, 2 payments for ecosystem services, and 71 biodiversity-positive subsidies are in force but are not shown here as their start date is unavailable (referred to as "Total"). 16 inactive instruments with unknown start date are not reflected in the figure. Panel B: An additional 8 countries have taxes, 9 have fees, 1 has a payment for ecosystem service and 1 has biodiversity-positive subsidies but these are not shown in this figure as starting dates for these instruments are unknown. Source: (OECD, 2024^[23]), OECD PINE database accessed 27 August 2024.



114
All Years

 56
This Year
2025

 **48**
This Month
Oct 2025

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Change Region

Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)

Horowhenua District, Manawatu-Wanganui, New Zealand

Bird List

Recent Checklists

eBirders

Illustrated Checklist

EXPLORE...

Hotspot Map

Bar Charts

Media

Rare Bird Alerts

Printable Checklist

114All Years

56This Year
2025

48This Month
Oct 2025

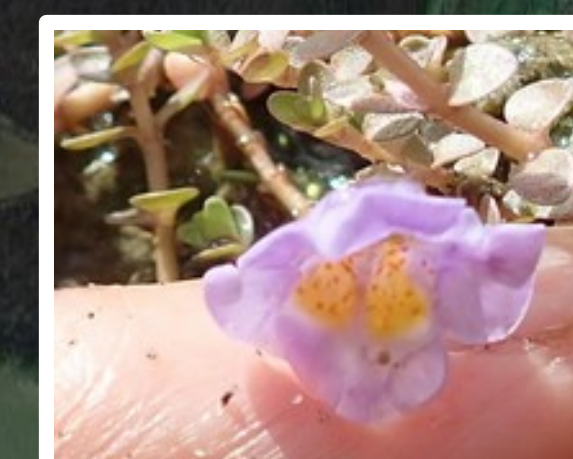
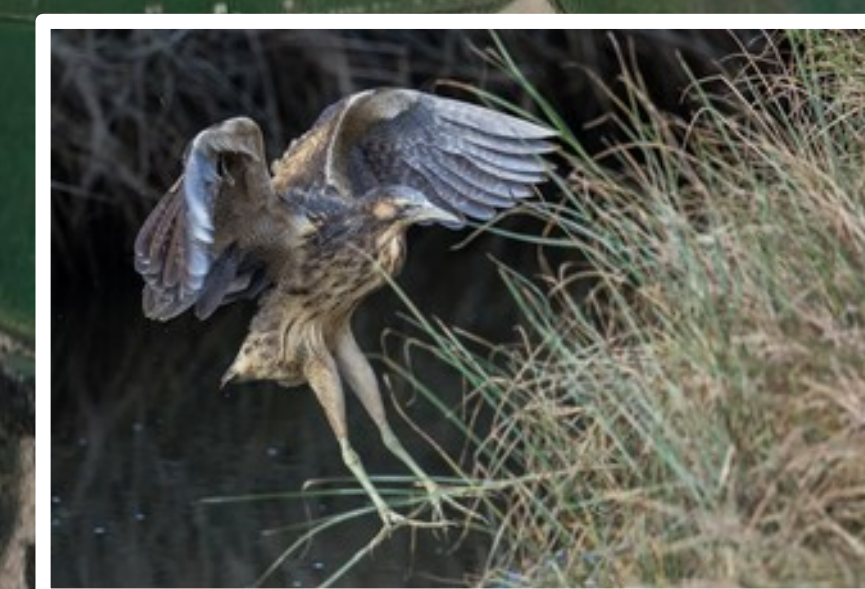
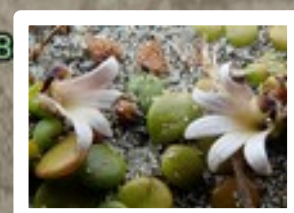
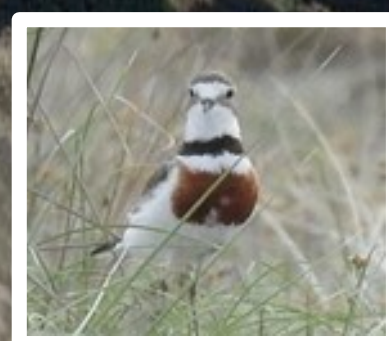
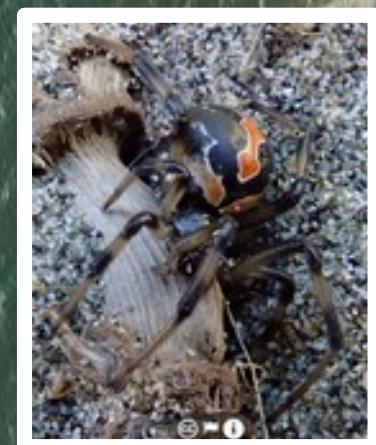
Last Observed

First Observed

High Count

Custom

SPECIES NAME	COUNT	DATE	OBSERVER	LOCATION
1. Ring-necked Pheasant <i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	* 2	5 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
2. Double-banded Plover <i>Anarhynchus bicinctus</i>	2	5 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
3. Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i>	1	5 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
4. Swamp Harrier <i>Circus approximans</i>	1	5 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
5. Shining Bronze-Cuckoo <i>Chalcites lucidus</i>	1	4 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
6. Great Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	2	4 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
7. Tui <i>Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae</i>	1	4 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
8. Redpoll <i>Acanthis flammea</i>	* 4	4 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
9. Canada Goose <i>Branta canadensis</i>	* 4	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
10. Black Swan <i>Cygnus atratus</i>	* 9	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
11. Paradise Shelduck <i>Tadorna variegata</i>	1	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
12. Australasian Shoveler <i>Spatula rhynchos</i>	2	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
13. Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	* 28	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
14. Gray Teal <i>Anas gracilis</i>	7	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
15. New Zealand Scaup <i>Aythya novaeseelandiae</i>	1	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
16. Rock Pigeon <i>Columba livia</i>	* 6	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
17. Australasian Swamphen <i>Porphyrio melanotus</i>	8	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
18. Pied Stilt <i>Himantopus leucocephalus</i>	5	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
19. South Island Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus finschi</i>	8	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
20. Pacific Golden-Plover <i>Pluvialis fulva</i>	3	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
21. Masked Lapwing <i>Vanellus miles</i>	11	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
22. Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>	131	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
23. Red Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i>	3	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
24. Caspian Tern <i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	3	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
25. Little Pied Cormorant <i>Microcarbo melanoleucos</i>	1	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
26. Pied Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax varius</i>	7	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
27. Royal Spoonbill <i>Platalea regia</i>	18	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
28. White-faced Heron <i>Egretta novaehollandiae</i>	4	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
29. Sacred Kingfisher <i>Todiramphus sanctus</i>	1	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
30. Gray Gerygone <i>Gerygone igata</i>	1	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
31. New Zealand Fantail <i>Rhipidura fuliginosa</i>	2	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
32. Welcome Swallow <i>Hirundo neoxena</i>	6	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
33. Silvereye <i>Zosterops lateralis</i>	5	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
34. European Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	* 26	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
35. Song Thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i>	* 4	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
36. Eurasian Blackbird <i>Turdus merula</i>	* 7	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
37. House Sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i>	* 37	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
38. Common Chaffinch <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	* 10	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
39. European Greenfinch <i>Chloris chloris</i>	* 8	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
40. European Goldfinch <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	* 3	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
41. Yellowhammer <i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	* 2	3 Oct 2025	Neill Haggarty	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
42. Variable Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus unicolor</i>	3	3 Oct 2025	Josiah Ensing	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
43. Silver Gull <i>Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae</i>	3	3 Oct 2025	Josiah Ensing	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
44. Black-billed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus bulleri</i>	4	3 Oct 2025	Josiah Ensing	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
45. Kelp Gull <i>Larus dominicanus</i>	18	3 Oct 2025	Josiah Ensing	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
46. White-fronted Tern <i>Sterna striata</i>	4	3 Oct 2025	Josiah Ensing	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
47. Australian Magpie <i>Gymnorhina tibicen</i>	* 1	3 Oct 2025	Josiah Ensing	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)
48. Eurasian Skylark <i>Alauda arvensis</i>	* 1	3 Oct 2025	Josiah Ensing	Foxton Beach--Manawatu estuary (general)



satmap view, high tide, Sept. 2025

3) Threatened species in this Ramsar site

This is not a complete depiction. There are many more. A big question remains – How many do we not even know about?



The list of threatened species lists:

The conservation status of a species is a forecast based on observed trends and likely pressures.

How species are assessed

Panels of experts from New Zealand's scientific community determine a species' conservation status using the following assessments:

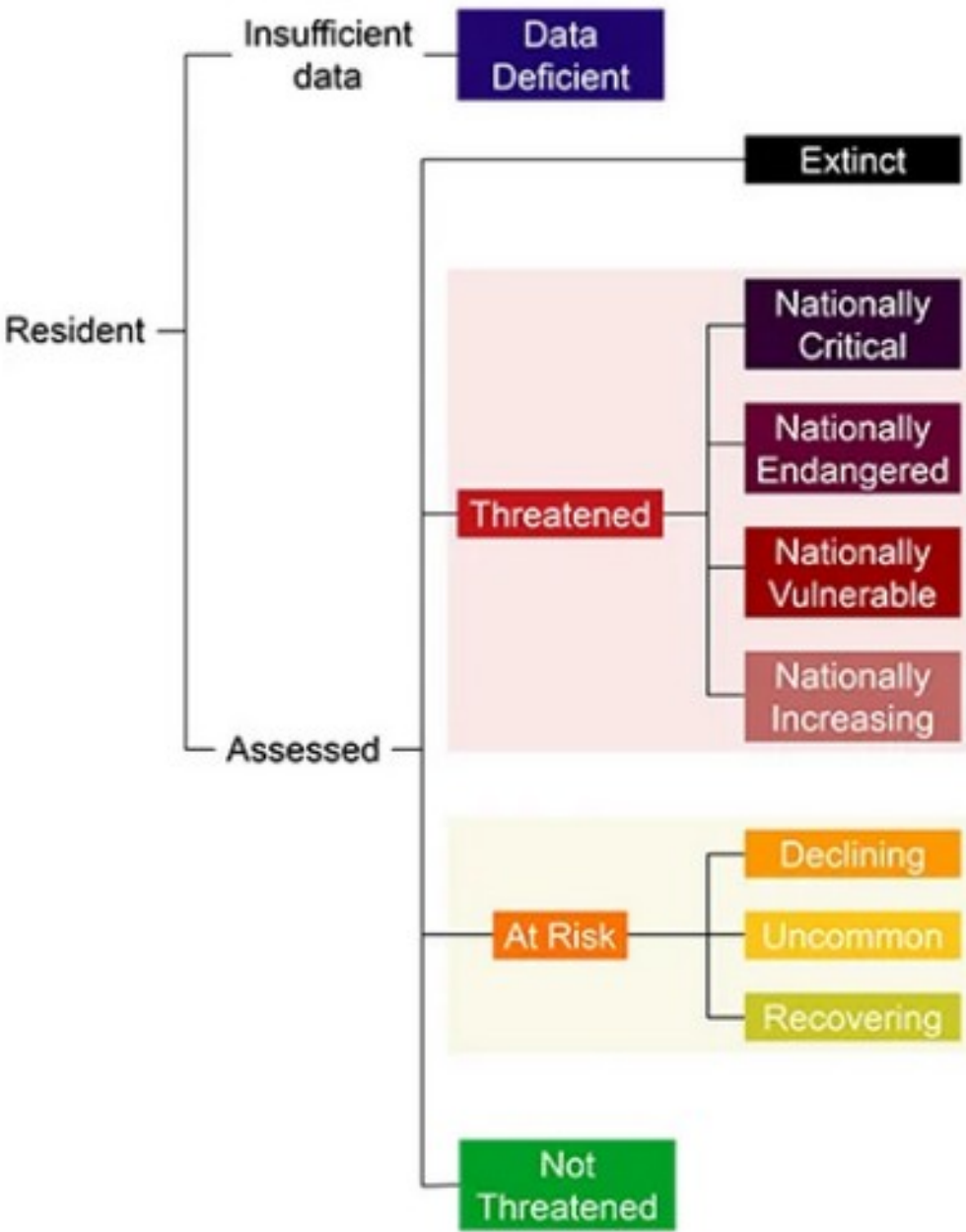
- What's the current population size? This can be the number of breeding adults or the area of occupied habitat.
- How much is the population estimated to rise or fall over either the next three generations or 10 years (whichever is longer)?
- If the population is stable, has it declined in the past?
- Is the population state a result of human-induced effects?

Difference between endangered and threatened

The terms 'endangered' and 'threatened' are used interchangeably by different organisations to express similar concepts – species being in danger of becoming extinct.

In the New Zealand Threat Classification System these terms mean two different things.

- The term 'Threatened' is used as an umbrella category that groups conservation statuses with the greatest risk of extinction. For example: small population with greater rate of decline.
- The term 'Endangered' is used to name one specific conservation status – Nationally Endangered.



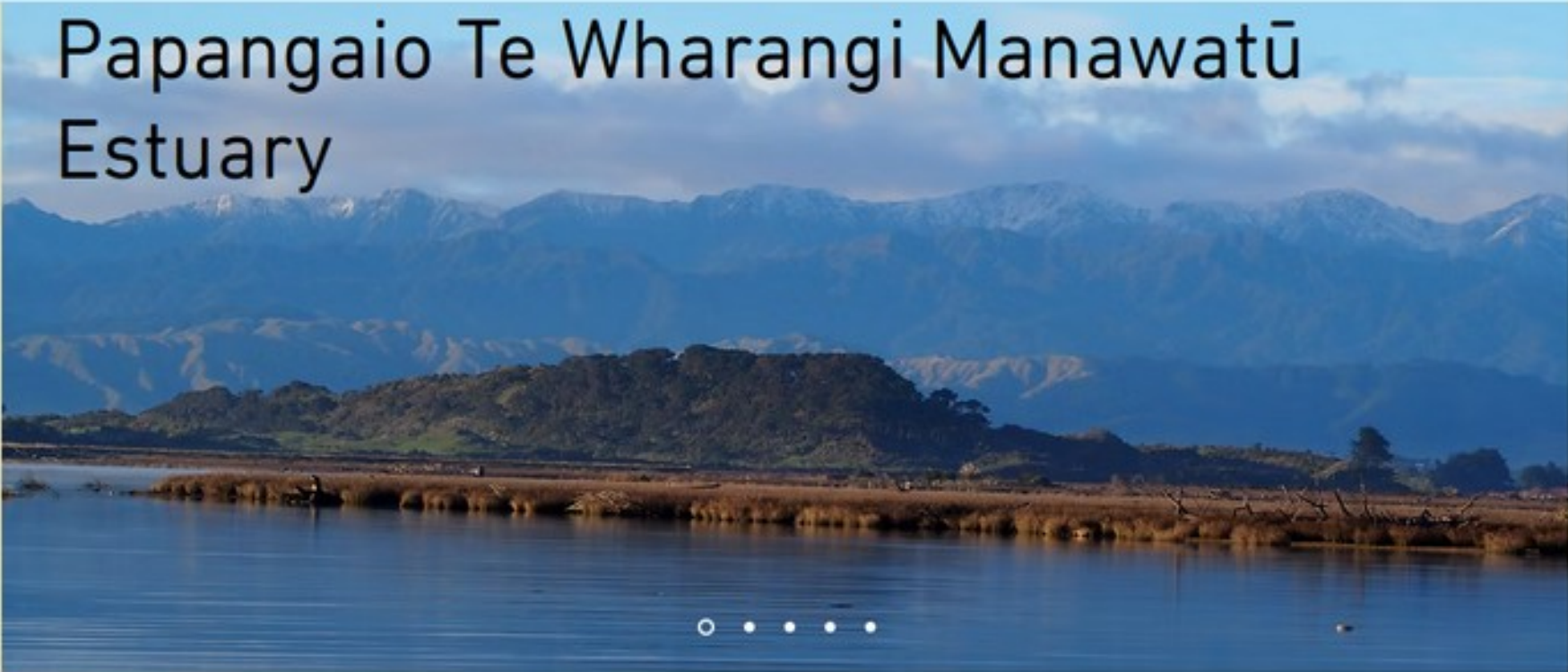
Relationship of NZTCS categories
Image: DOC

Report Name	Year Assessed	Year Published
Amphibians 2024 (Burns et al. 2025)	2024	2025
Marine Mammals 2024 (Lundquist et al. 2025)	2024	2025
Mosses 2025 (Michel et al.)	2025	2025
Terrestrial Gastropoda: 3. Rhytididae (carnivorous snails), 2022 (Walker et al. 2024)	2022	2024
Vascular plants 2023 (de Lange et al. 2024)	2023	2024
Bats 2022 (O'Donnell et al. 2023)	2022	2023
Marine invertebrates 2021 (Funnel et al. 2023)	2021	2023
Mushroom fungi (Agaricales Boletales Russulales) 2021 (Cooper et al. 2022)	2021	2022
Orthoptera 2022 (Trewick et al. 2022)	2022	2022
Parasitic mites and ticks (Acari) 2021 (Heath et al. 2022)	2021	2022
Birds 2021 (Robertson et al. 2021)	2021	2021
Reptiles 2021 (Hitchmough et al. 2021)	2021	2021
Spiders 2020 (Sirvid et al. 2021)	2020	2021
Terrestrial Gastropoda 2020: 1. Athoracophoridae (leaf-veined slugs) and Succineidae (Barker et al. 2021)	2020	2021
Terrestrial Gastropoda 2020: 2. Achatinellidae Bothriembryontidae (pupuharakeke) Helicarionidae Pupinidae Vertiginidae (Walker et al. 2021)	2020	2021
Hornworts and liverworts 2020 (de Lange et al. 2020)	2020	2020
Macroalgae 2019 (Nelson et al. 2019)	2019	2019
Chondrichthyans (chimaeras sharks rays) 2016 (Duffy et al. 2018)	2016	2018
Freshwater fishes 2017 (Dunn et al. 2018)	2017	2018
Freshwater invertebrates 2018 (Grainger et al. 2018)	2018	2018
Lichens 2018 (de Lange et al. 2018)	2018	2018
Onychophora 2018 (Trewick et al. 2018)	2018	2018
Hymenoptera 2014 (Ward et al. 2017)	2014	2017
Lepidoptera 2015 (Hoare et al. 2017)	2015	2017
Stick insects 2014 (Buckley et al. 2016)	2014	2016
Earthworms 2014 (Buckley et al. 2015)	2014	2015
Fleas 2014 (Heath et al. 2015)	2014	2015
Aphids 2010 (Stringer et al. 2012)	2010	2012
Coleoptera 2010 (Leschen et al. 2012)	2010	2012
Diptera 2010 (Andrew et al. 2012)	2010	2012
Hemiptera 2010 (Stringer et al. 2012)	2010	2012
Minor invertebrate groups 2010 (Buckley et al. 2012)	2010	2012
Nematodes 2010 (Yeates et al. 2012)	2010	2012
Terrestrial Gastropoda 2010: Charopidae and Punctidae (micro-snails) (Mahlfeld et al. 2012)	2010	2012
Fungi excluding selected species of Agaricales Boletales Russulales 2005 (Hitchmough et al. 2007)	2005	2007



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Papangaio Te Wharangi Manawatū Estuary

Information on this website is found by clicking on related pictures, links or via the search button. Checklist species can be found via the find and search icon on the home page ribbon on the relevant spreadsheet once opened.

The Manawatū Estuary Trust is a charitable Trust that was formed in 2001 by members of The Royal Forest



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Fauna and Flora

The Manawatū Estuary offers important habitat for many different wildlife species, and has one of the highest bird diversities in New Zealand. In addition, it is home to a number of threatened fish and plant species. Click on the links below to learn more about some of the species you might see there.

[Manawatu Estuary web](https://www.metrust.org.nz)



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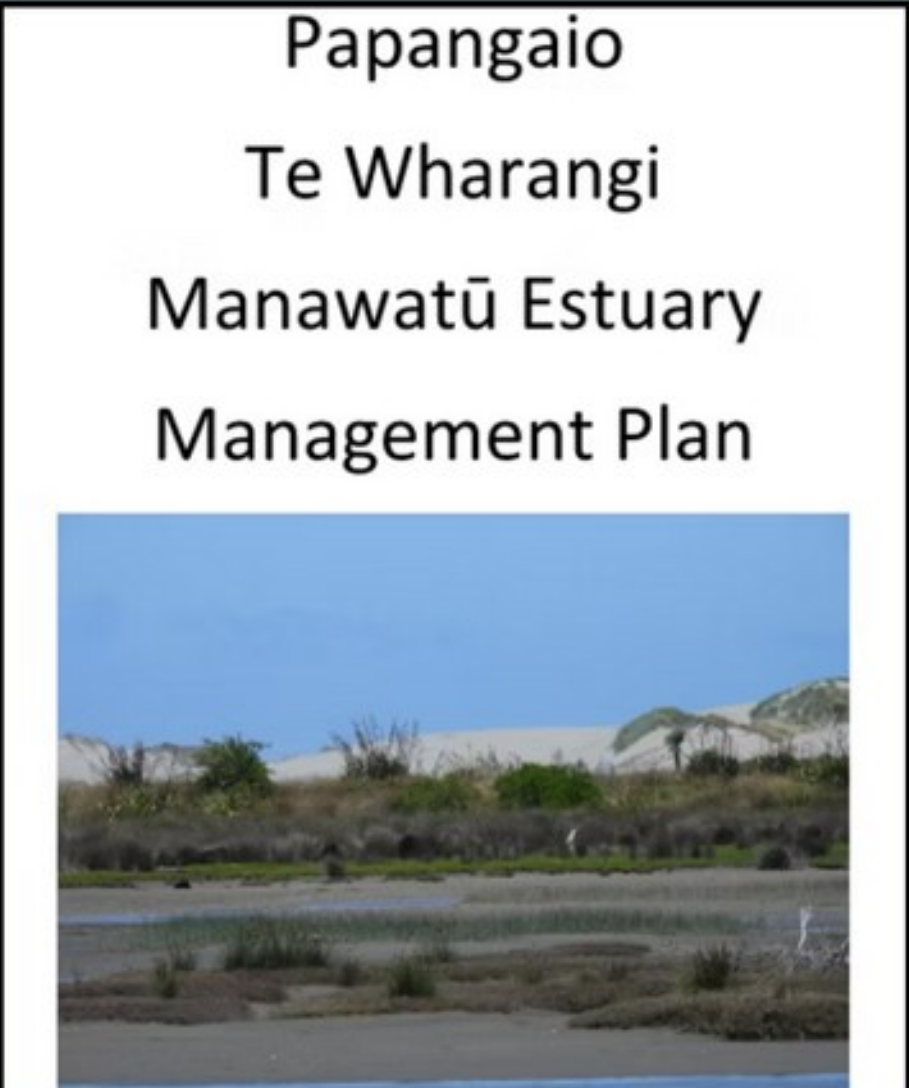
The quality of water flowing through the estuary from the adjacent towns and land and from the entire upstream length of the Manawatū River and its tributaries has a profound effect on the health of the habitat for all forms of life in the estuary.

The Manawatū Estuary Management Team has formed a Water Quality group that is looking into gaining a good understanding of the water quality and what is going on that could improve it.



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Dune Wilderness – *Hidden in Plain Sight*

The Dune Garden is an ephemeral dune wetland surrounded by a ring of tall, dry dunes, on the western edge of the Manawatu Estuary Ramsar site. It is the most studied and actively managed coastal site on this coast, and probably much wider. As such it is a good wilderness habitat to explore, learn about, and better yet, become involved in its protection.

Does that cover “What”? Questions?

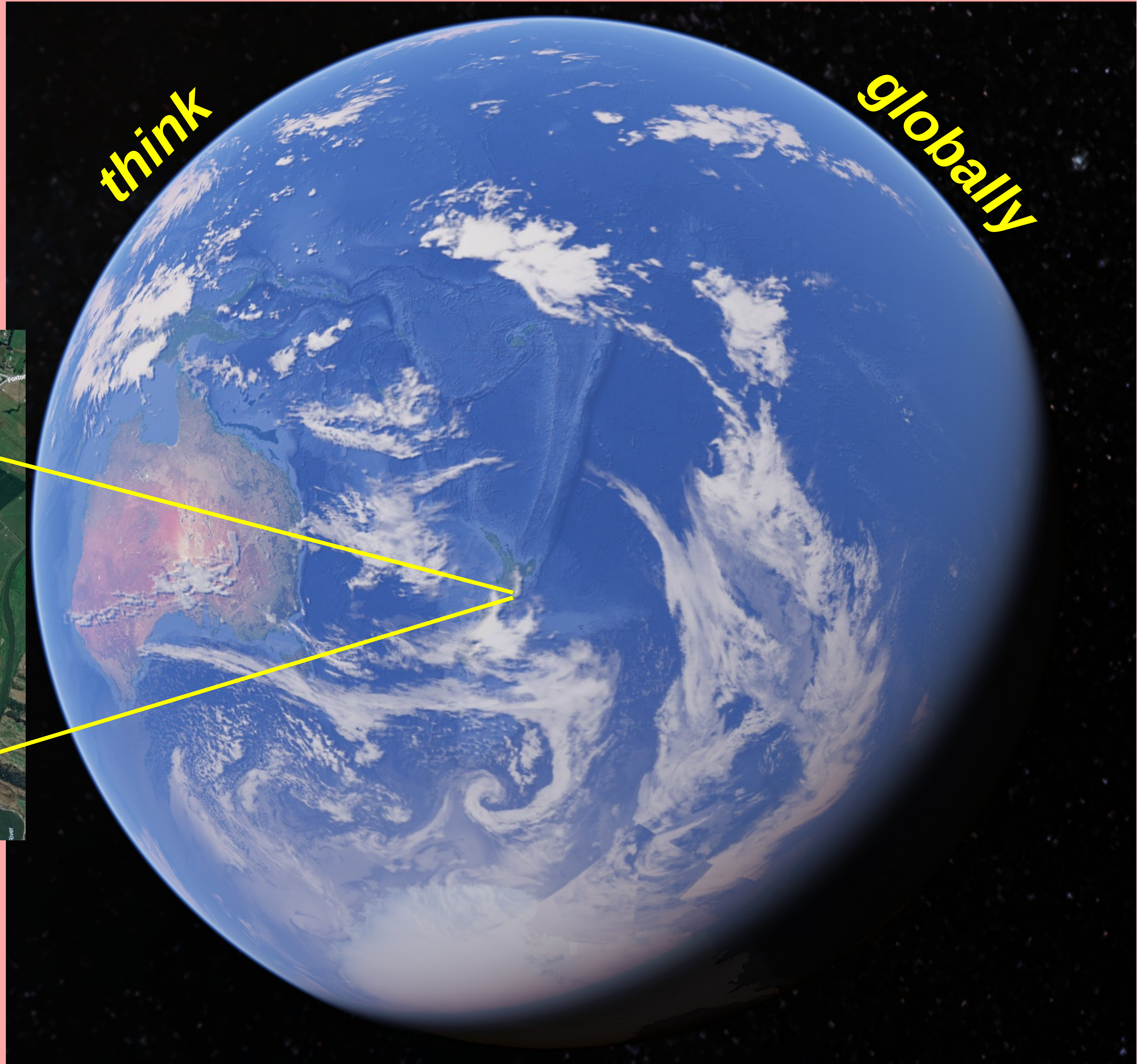
How can you help?

act

locally

think

globally



How can you help?

Pick any

Let's look at two:





**Citizen science monitoring
of species in the Manawatu
Estuary Ramsar site, via
iNaturalist.nz**

You can too!

**This is one way to learn
about species...**

Oct. 2025 arnim@actrix.gen.nz all software used to create this is open source



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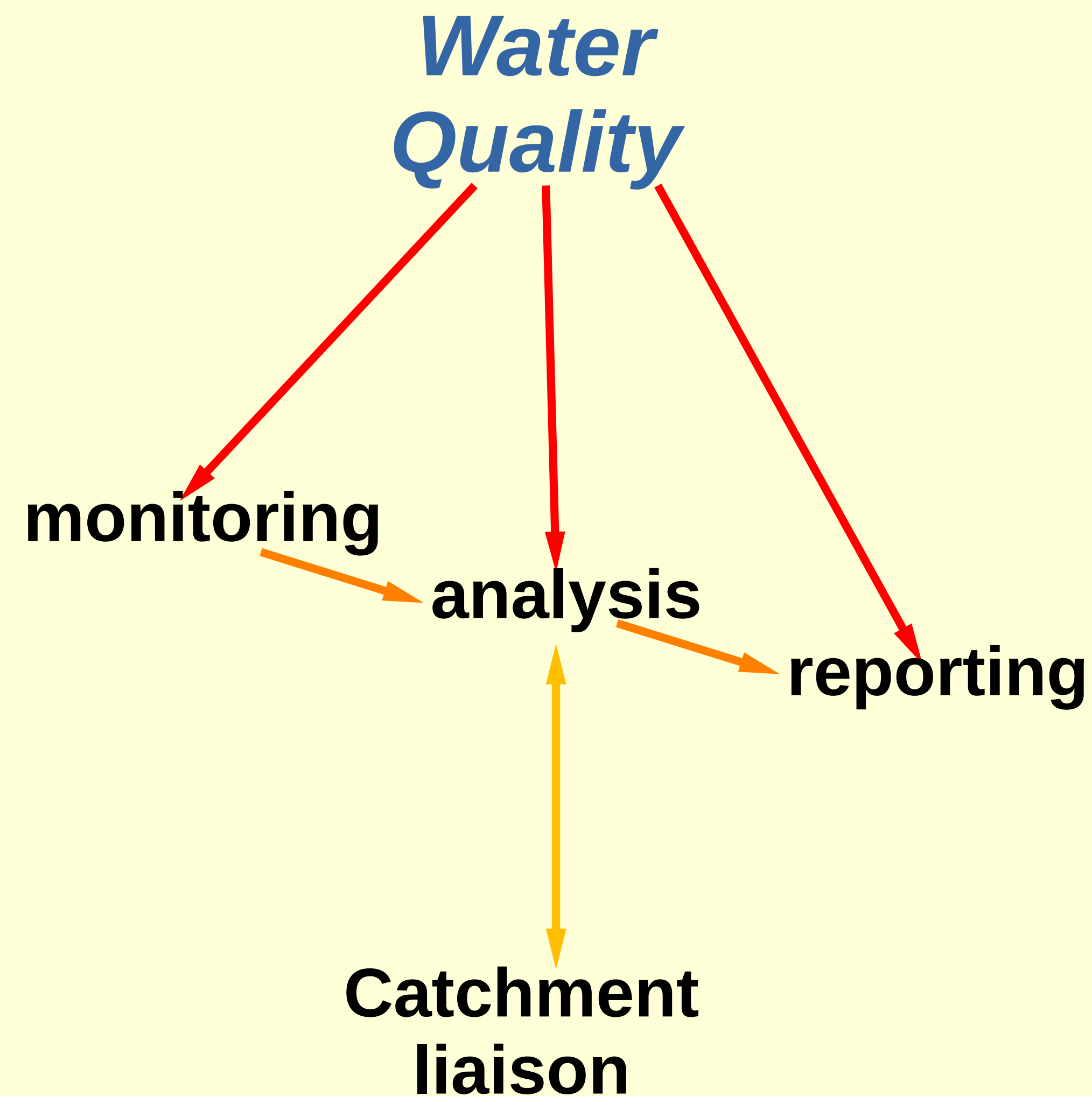
"In one drop of water are found all the secrets of the ocean."

Poet and philosopher, Kahlil Gibran

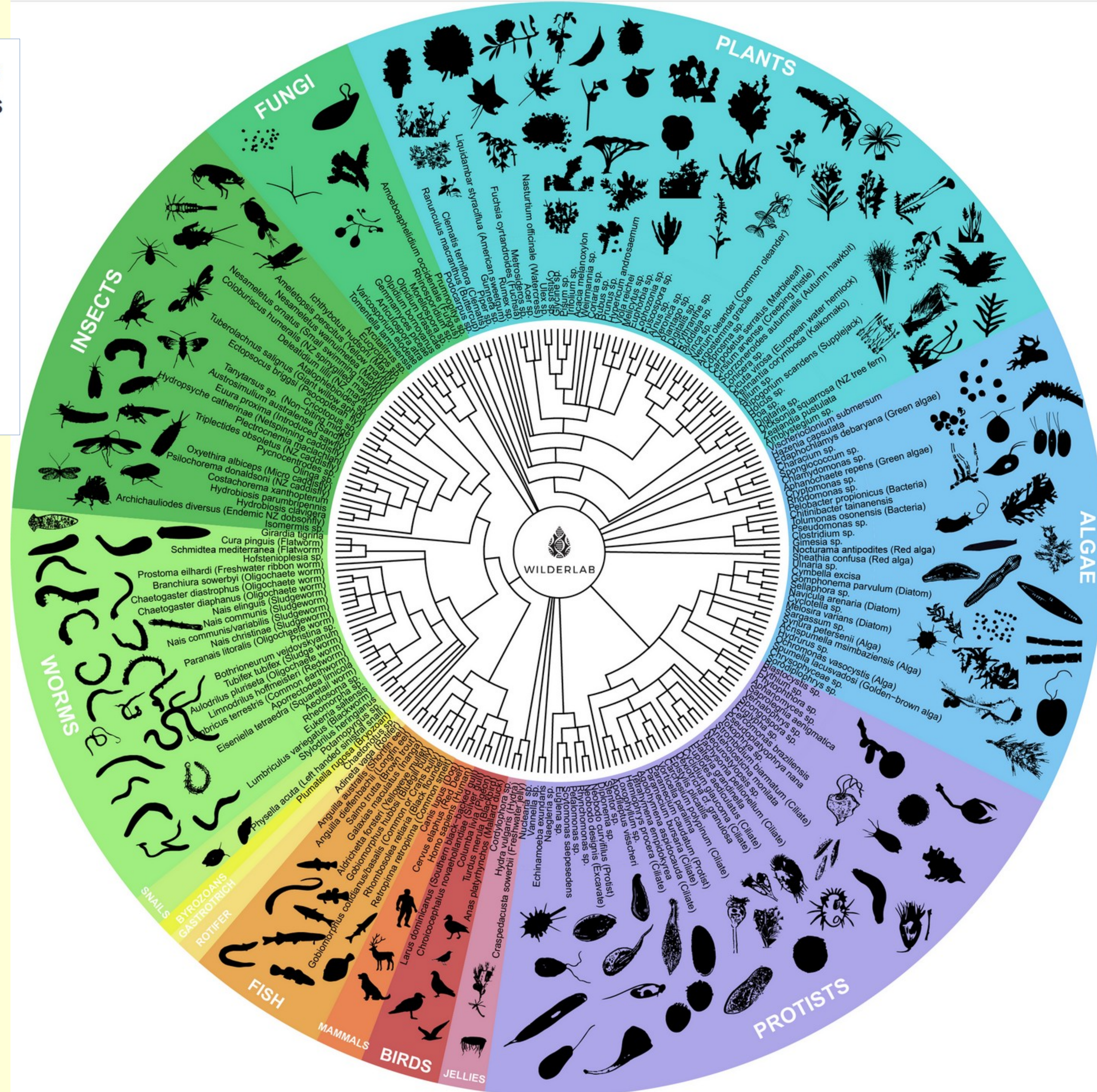
Environmental DNA, or eDNA, refers to all the tiny traces of genetic material that is left behind as living things pass through water or soil.

In your backyard, local stream or boggy field lurks a secret web of co-conspirators. Largely unseen, they slink and swoosh, creep and crawl, helping each other to survive. Sometimes there are many, sometimes there are few. How do we know this? They leave their DNA behind.

From kērēru to kōwhai, and the leaves in the wind, all living things shed genetic information into their local environment. This is called environmental DNA, or eDNA.



eDNA is a game changer



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