



Ecosystem services



Ecosystem services are a variety of benefits to human society from biodiversity and ecosystems. These services can be classified into different types: 1) services providing economic resources, ex, foods, water, timbers, or genetic resources, 2) services retaining basic foundations for ecosystems and human society, ex, production of oxygen and organic matters by photosynthesis, and nutrient cycles, 3) services regulating atmosphere, water and soil systems, 4) services providing habitat spaces and environments for organisms, and 5) services mending mental health, providing opportunities of education and worship, and providing recreation and refreshment. With thus much of aspects ecosystems can be described, and the services themselves interrelate one another having strong direct and indirect links to our society and economy. Importantly, balancing sustainability among different ecosystem services is the challenge confronting our society under the regime of environmental crises. It is not difficult to imagine that exploiting the services relevant to goods productions (ex, timber production from natural forests) would lead to a degradation of other ecosystem services, or that protection of natural habitats by establishing protected areas or hunting regulations would result in turning economy related services or cultural services down. In order to retain the sustainability of ecosystem services exploited from the limited land area of Japan, we have to carefully account for the capacity and potential of each ecosystem service for conservation and management plannings, and visualizing features on geographic maps is an essential step.

Toward this end, we provide geographic maps of features relevant to ecosystem services.

■ Reference ■

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