



The British government has issued a [new report](#) assessing the value of the U.K. environment. The assessment is based on an economic evaluation of ecosystem services. For instance, the report found that:

- The benefits that inland wetlands bring to water quality are worth up to £1.5 billion per year to the UK;
- Pollinators are worth £430 million per year to British agriculture;
- The amenity benefits of living close to rivers, coasts and other wetlands is worth up to £1.3 billion per year to the UK; and
- The health benefits of living with a view of a green space are worth up to £300 per person per year.

The report warns that the British environment will be under increasing stress, not only from climate change, but from demographic trends:

The country's population is projected to grow to nearly 72 million by 2033 on current trends, increasing demand for food and other basic services. Moreover, the proportion of single person households has increased dramatically in the past few decades, from 12% in 1961 to nearly 30% today. This trend is likely to continue, leading to pressure to convert more land to housing and increasing per capita demand for water and energy. To date climate change has had a relatively small impact on the UK's biodiversity and ecosystems. However, impacts are predicted to increase over the coming decades, with more severe weather events and changes to rainfall patterns, with implications for agriculture, flood control and many other services, both locally indicated by an increase in soil pH.

The U.S., of course, faces similar issues, in a political context that is currently unfavorable for environmental preservation. The contrast in terms of environmental issues is especially striking because the British government is controlled by budget-slashing conservatives, who nonetheless seem to value the environment, unlike their American counterparts.

