

A Photographic Essay

Wetland Landscapes and Values



WetlandLIFE is a three year (2016 – 2019) interdisciplinary project funded by the AHRC, ESRC and NERC through the Valuing Nature Programme¹. With a particular emphasis on mosquitoes, the project uses perspectives from science, social science, humanities and the arts to explore how understanding wetland values can help facilitate their use and management. The project studies the cultural, historical and economic values of wetlands alongside an ecological focus on mosquitoes now and in the past. The overarching aim of the project is to deliver ecological guidance for managing mosquito populations for healthy wetlands within the context of a place-based understanding of wetland values. The photographic essay is one contribution within the project to an exploration of wetland places.

The aim of the photographic essay is to document a sense of place of lowland English wetlands and stimulate a creative conversation around wetland values. Reference will be made to both nature and society to think about wetlands as places where human and non-human worlds are juxtaposed to create dynamic multifunctional landscapes. Where appropriate some emphasis will be given to the role of mosquitoes in the landscape as an often unseen and misunderstood organism.

The essay will explore wetland themes of:

- Wildness / management
- Human use
- Material culture / history
- Nature / human
- Mosquito values / disvalues

The photographic essay will range across a wide variety of lowland wetlands but focus in particular on 12 wetland sites. In addition to contextual images from elsewhere each of the main 12 sites will be represented in approximately 10 photographs. A selection of all photographs will be used to create three end of project exhibitions which will form part of a deliberation of shared values around wetlands. The collection of images will also contribute to a place based account of lowland wetlands in England at the start of the 21st Century and will form a display on the WetlandLIFE website.

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