



Title: “Paeora Estuary”

Description: Canola crop alongside Paeora Estuary, South Canterbury.

Photographer: Henrik Moller

Where, when: Paeora Estuary, South Canterbury, October 2021.

Sustainability? The primary attraction of the canola crop for me was the splash of yellow in the landscape, especially when viewed against a stormy sky or cold expanse of water like in this photograph across the Paeora Estuary.

Ecologists sometimes team up with economists to place an economic valuation on the “ecosystem services” provided by nature. Valuation is fraught because of connection and co-dependence of social-ecological and economic processes – it becomes somewhat subjective where you place the boundaries. Despite this, “Ecological economics” is potentially useful for sustainability decision-making because it provides a common currency to balance financial, social and natural capitals and flows. Fundamentally it is an attempt to put a monetary value on environmental care and sustainability in a world where commercial benefits and costs normally predominate in policy and decision-making.

Ecosystem services are often divided into four categories: *provisioning*, such as the production of food and water; *regulating*, such as the control of climate and disease; *supporting*, such as nutrient cycles and oxygen production; and *cultural*, such as spiritual and recreational benefits. We could place the aesthetic pleasure that I and many fellow-travellers felt in seeing the canola crops last October and November into the cultural services basket. Indeed, most of the efforts of the Ecosystem Photography team contributing to this website are directed to reflecting these cultural and spiritual services.

Formal valuation of Ecosystem Services is rare in New Zealand. What value would you place on seeing the canola crops in southern Canterbury? And if this appreciation is shared by the general public and the farmer, how can we balance the costs and benefits of land use decisions on private land with public benefits. In the case of canola crops, it’s a win-win for private and public interests because the crop is financially rewarding and the view for the travellers is free – but how can we resolve

the more difficult trade-offs when the cost to public (for example of ecologically degraded rivers) is coupled with increased costs or foregone economic opportunities of the farmers working the land?

This is one of 6 images of the canola crops presented in this gallery (HM#001 – HM#006). I was attracted to this canola (oil seed rape) crop at Hook, 15 km south of Timaru, because of its arresting colour. My thoughts on the importance of appreciating our rural landscapes is outlined in the description for the image “Yellow Hook (1)” and “Paeora Estuary”; and its role in crop rotations is outlined in the description for “Yellow Hook (2)”. The role of plant selection and Genetic Modification is explored in “Yellow Hook (3)” and aesthetic value in and “Paeora” and rural decline in “Barn on the brae”.

Photo notes: This is a panorama from 21 exposures for 1/250s, 70 mm focal length, f/18, ISO-100.
Let’s hope I have now got the yellow out of my systems for a while!

Digital specs: 15,821 x 4,747 pixels (75 MP).

Key words: Farming, rural landscape, ecosystem evaluation, ecosystem services, cultural services, canola, oil-seed rape, cropping, estuary, yellow, grey, Henrik Moller, Aotearoa, New Zealand, Sustainability.

Price: \$200 (incl. GST) for use of the digital image.

Visit www.ecosystemsphotography/sales for details & to order, and to get a quote if you want a high-quality print.

Donation: The price includes a \$100 donation to a sustainability organisation or project of your choice, or otherwise for the *Pareora Catchment Society*.

I recommend that the donation goes to the *Pareora Catchment Society* because it is a not-for-profit coalition of farmers and local citizens who are working to improve water quality and biodiversity in the Pareora estuary and river.

Image Ref: HM#004 (Please refer to this reference in orders and correspondence).

Henrik Moller
29 November 2021.