

Chapter 16

Introduction to Cultural Services



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Abstract Cultural services of marine bivalves are of high value as they provide well-being in many different ways. These services are more difficult to quantify but provide a lot of qualities. Shell collectioning, shells as archives, community efforts for bivalve restoration and gardening are some cases of cultural services. Marine bivalves have been recognized as a carrier of a variety of cultures since pre-historic times.

Keywords Shells · Shell collection · Gardening

Cultural services are defined in the Millennium Assessment as the nonmaterial benefits people obtain from ecosystems, such as cultural diversity, spiritual and religious values, knowledge systems, educational values, inspiration, aesthetic values, social relations, sense of place, cultural heritage values, recreation and ecotourism (Millennium Assessment 2005). For marine bivalves many examples exist of cultural services. Shells are well-known collector items. Collecting seashore shells is worldwide spread leisure activity, and an organised profession as well, in the framework of the scientific discipline of malacology. This links to marine bivalves as a source of knowledge. Shells as fossil records have information for evolutionary studies, and their mineral content can reflect past climatological events as long-term archives. Shells are widely used for decoration and in art. Educational programs and community involvement exist in bivalve restoration programs. Sea gardening of marine bivalves is an upcoming leisure activity. Hence cultural services link directly to social structures that provide the framework for the appreciation of these

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services. Nonmaterial services may be more difficult to quantify than the other services, yet the benefits for people go far beyond the material benefits, as it concerns the core of human life that is able to reflect on all different services of – in this case – the marine bivalves (Daniel et al. 2012). In this section some examples of cultural services are reviewed, from community activities in different forms to scientific application of shell archaeology.

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