**Methods**

*GMSE*

GMSE is designed to simulate dynamic decision-making by different stakeholders in a social-ecological system. The stakeholders are a) the “manager” who represents an appropriate authority, for example a protected area manager or a natural resource manager, and b) the “users” who represent independent actors such as farmers. Additionally, there is a natural “resource” population, for example animals or trees, that requires management. In each simulation, the manager is attempting to get the resource population to as close to a pre-determined value as possible, and the users are trying to maximise their utility on the landscape. Simulations in GMSE are comprised of four submodels that govern the social-ecological system, each of which can be individually parameterised (Fig. Sx – fig 1 Duthie et al 2018). The submodels are (1) the natural resource model which is used to simulate the biological population within the system. The natural resource model can simulate complex spatially explicit biological populations that have individual traits such as age, and population-level traits such as carrying capacity and related density-dependent mortality. Because individuals within the population have discrete traits there is inherent stochasticity within the population. (2) The observation model represents the observation process, and the associated error, whereby the manager estimates the size of the natural resource population. The manager sets policy based on the estimates rather than the actual population size, thus introducing uncertainty that exists in the real world. The submodel has four methods available which mimic commonly used biological monitoring techniques. (3) the manager model which uses the genetic algorithm (GA, see below) to develop management policies that reduce deviation of the natural resource population from the target population size. The manager achieves this by dynamically altering the cost of actions for the users thereby increasing or decreasing the ability of the users to act on the resources. (4) The user model, in which after the manager has set the policy, each user calls the GA to develop a strategy for that time step that maximises their utility (e.g. maximises their yield) given the constraints imposed by the manager. Users can choose to act on the natural resources (e.g. cull or scare) which can affect the resource population (e.g. if they choose to cull) or the landscape cell (e.g. if they choose to scare, forcing resources onto another cell). These changes then feed into the natural resource submodel in the next time step. For detailed explanations of the submodels, see Duthie et al (2018) and the documentation for the GMSE R package.

The primary approach to altering system dynamics is via the manager and user budgets. These parameters are relative rather than absolute and so the actual values are less important than the relationship between them. Generally, when the manager has a high relative budget, they have a greater ability to set policies that will influence the resource population in the desired way. For example, if the resource population is below the target, a manager with a relatively high budget can increase the costs of culling for the users, thus reducing the users’ ability to cull, and in turn allowing the resource population to recover. Conversely, if users have a relatively high budget, then they are more likely to be able to afford to take actions such as culling, even if the manager is setting the costs as high as possible. The budgets, and the associated dynamics, can be used to replicate various real-world systems and scenarios such as conservation conflicts, power dynamics, and lobbying (refs).

*Genetic algorithm*

The GA is the core process by which the manager develops policy and users decide upon actions. The GA mimics the process of natural selection whereby each call to the GA results in several possible strategies being initialised. Multiple iterations then allow cross-over and mutation between the initialised strategies, ensuring that budgets are not exceeded. Each subsequent iteration of strategies is selected via a fitness function and a tournament. This process results in adaptive, but not necessarily optimal, strategies for the manager and the users. In each simulation time step the GA is called by the manager and each of the users to simulate decision-making. The GA first takes the manager’s budget constraints, user action histories, and the predicted consequences of each action on the resource population and develops a strategy for the manager to reduce deviation from the target resource population size. Once the manager’s policy is established users will individually call the GA to decide upon actions that maximise their utility, in this case agricultural yield. Users can either tend their crops or fell trees, both of which will increase their yield. Their ability to fell trees is governed by both the user budget, and the manager’s policy, in each time step.

*Parameterisation*

Define the landscape, and the scenarios – what are the resources, what are the objectives of the user and manager etc.