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Conflicting Uses of Natural Resources and Derived Problems in Mangrove Forest Remnants in Peru

SUSANA PONCE

Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Faculty of Forest Science and Forest Ecology, Germany

Abstract

This review analyses the current conservation status and the problems associated with the mangrove ecosystem in relation to land tenure and the way people use the natural resources. Mangroves are highly productive ecosystems, but very fragile as well. They have been subjected to intense use mainly from the aquaculture industry. The study has been done in the National Sanctuary “Los Manglares de Tumbes” (NSLMT) located in northern coastal Peru (Department of Tumbes). This area represents the southern distributional limit of mangroves in the eastern Pacific Ocean coast. The National Sanctuary is the second highest protection category within the National System of Natural Protected Areas supported by the Peruvian Government. Over the last 30 years, positive and negative factors have influenced this unique ecosystem in Peru. Many different actors play important roles in this ecosystem and sometimes contradicting activities are carried out, resulting in severe conflicts. Severe negative impacts are caused by anthropogenic activities, enhanced by the fact that laws are not well defined, the poverty of local people, the lack of an effective control by local governments and unequal conservation and management objectives among the different institutions involved with the natural area. This wealth of actors and situations show how complex the management of the NSLMT is. Additionally, no long term basic or applied research is done, not even by local universities and NGOs. Without the necessary data it is difficult to manage sanctuary. As a result of the present analysis, more and better science is required, as well as the improvement of the relationship among the involved actors in the NSLMT to successfully manage and conserve it.

Keywords: Conservation, land tenure, management, mangroves, natural resources, resource utilisation