

Traditional Smoking of Freshwater Fish in the Western Region, Cameroon

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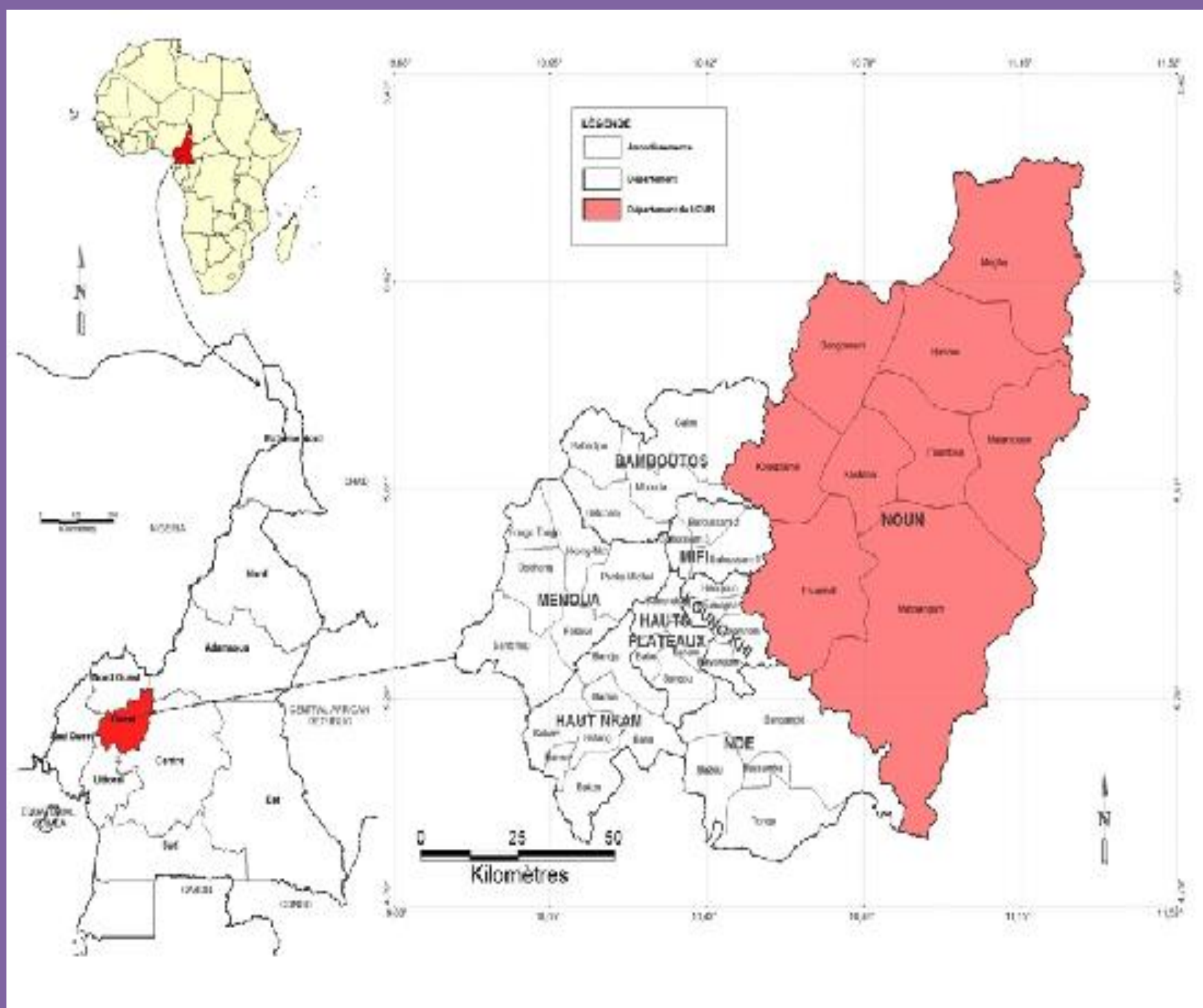


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CONTEXT: Cameroon Western Highlands constitute one of the regions most in need of innovative and healthy solutions for freshwater fish conservation. Fishing is a common activity in the Western Highlands of Cameroon, where major artificial dams are known for their production capacities. Noun division is almost the half of Western Region land cover, with a rapid deforestation because of smoking and high wood energy consumption tendencies. Majority of low earning households depend on fresh or preserved fish products to cover their proteins' intake. In Cameroon, fish products consumption contributes for about one third of all animal proteins consumption per individual. Sea and inland fisheries contribute globally to 5% employment and 5% of gross domestic product (MINEPIA, 2011). Several conservation methods were applied to fish products in Cameroon, among which smoking was preponderant (75%), followed by drying and salting (Pouomogne, 1998).

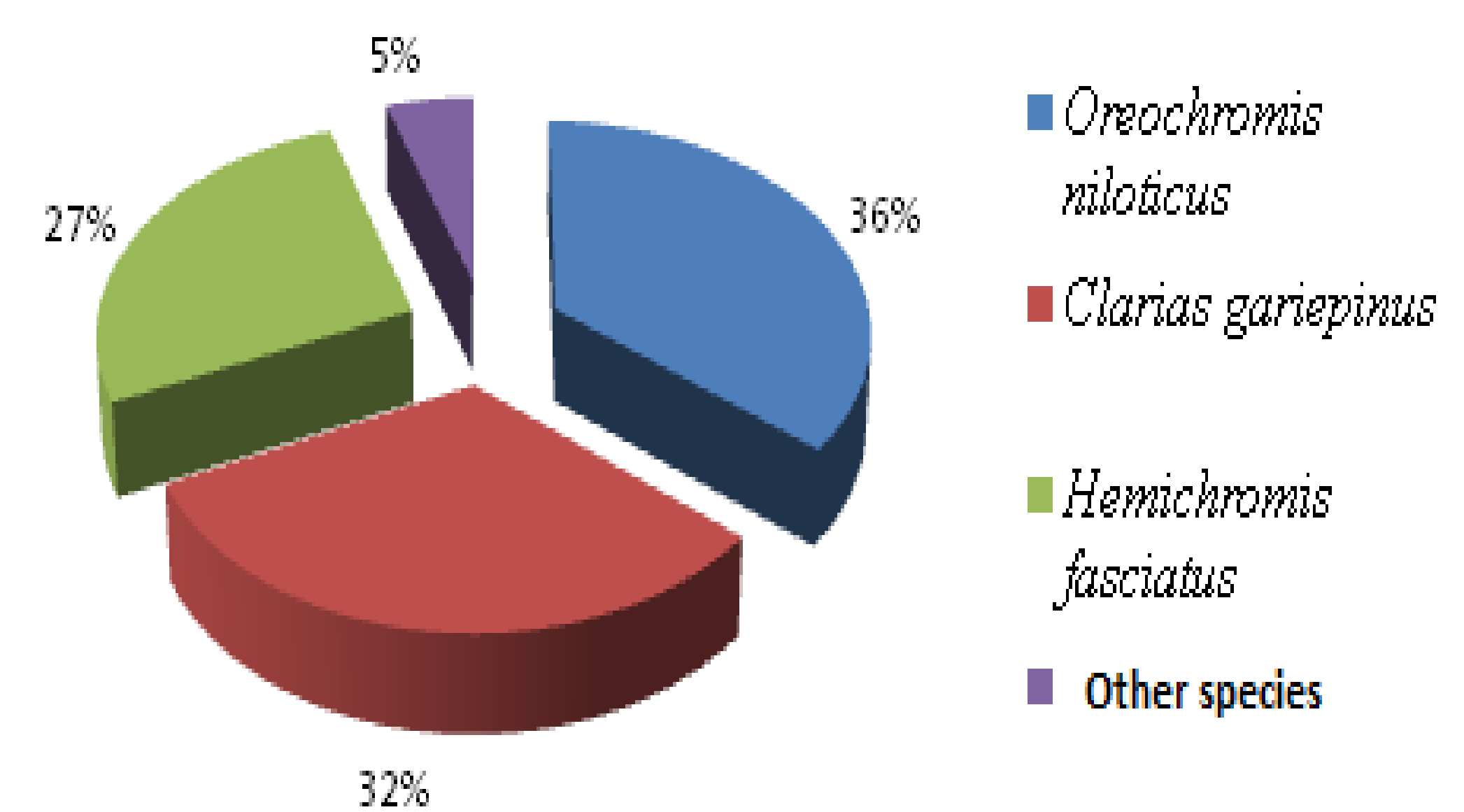
AIM: Evaluating the socio-economical characteristics of fish smokers in Noun Division (Western Highlands, Cameroon)

STUDY AREA:



Geographical location of research site

RESULTS:



Distribution of major fresh water fish smoked in Noun division



Typical traditional furnaces and smoking fishes over clays

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Rivers found in Noun Division, where continental fish catches are the most important in southern Cameroon, are regulated by Mape and Bamendjin dams. The research was carried out from March 2017 to September using a questionnaire, interviews and direct on site observations. Data collected were analyzed under Microsoft Excel 2007 and SPSS 21.0.

CONCLUSION: This research showed that Western Cameroon is one of the regions most in needs innovative and healthy solutions for freshwater fish conservation. The major constraints revealed by the survey were as follows: fresh waters small scale smoking activities in Noun Division are influenced by gender, economical and cultural background. Although fish smokers lack technical support and financial means, the majority of them, wishes to continue this activity for maintaining their level of food security and survival. The environmental impact of smoking efficiency and methods on forest depletion is to be monitored and assessed in further investigations.

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