

Mangrove Mapping in Cross River Estuary, Nigeria

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A survey was conducted along the coasts of the Cross River Estuary to classify the mangrove formations in association with other coastal vegetation. Nine formations and associations were mapped, viz: Only mangrove. Mangrove with fringing nypa palm. Nypa palm in front and middle, mangrove behind_ Mangrove and other trees. No nypa. Young mangrove in front, nypa in the middle, mangrove behind. No mangrove. No nypa, only other trees. Mangrove and other trees with *Pandanus* in front. Nypa in front, other trees behind, no mangrove. Natural factors such as degree of salinity influence the geographic distribution of different formations, as well as anthropogenic factors like exploitation and the man-induced dominance of nypa over mangrove. This classification should facilitate management and conservation programs for this ecosystem, e.g. by distinguishing between mangrove-rich and mangrove-poor parts, hence identifying areas for restoration measures. Based on the results of this survey also sites for a proposed development of the first mangrove national park of Nigeria were identified.