

Review of: "Ecological diversity, structure and exploitation of rattan stands according to a disturbance gradient around the Nkoltang forest, Estuary province of Gabon"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This paper offers detailed and very useful information. The authors are obviously experts, and the research appears to have been planned and carried out to a high standard. With some reorganization of the information, local farmers, rattan dealers, public authorities and conservation groups will find useful, integrated information to guide decisions.

The main problem I find in this paper is the lack of continuity in relation to the terms used. It is very clear what the authors want to tell us, but the terms used in the title and different sections are so varied that it is difficult to interconnect the information. Basically, according to the terminology, very little of the contents of the paper relates directly to the title.

There are several careless errors throughout the text, particularly noticeable in the results section regarding the use of italics, but there are problems throughout with italics, punctuation, brackets, figure legends in French, etc.

The English could be improved, although really there is no problem in understanding the contents. I would suggest using the term harvest / harvesting instead of "cutting"; harvest pressure instead of "operating pressure". Identified or registered instead of "inventoried",

The families of all the plant genera and species mentioned in the text should be included.

Abstract

Avoid repeating phrases such as "made it possible".

I would suggest including a very brief description of the forest types and elevation on the Abstract.

Introduction

Where the authors refer to "... all palm species known in tropical forest regions", are they referring to the world, the African continent or Gabon?

Study area

I would suggest replacing the phrase "The vegetation of the environment is anthropogenic",

with - The vegetation is secondary and of anthropogenic origin -

Choice of study site

Avoid repeating terms and words (e.g. “developing”; “regulated by the regulations of the eco-guard”).

I could be helpful to explain to readers the more specialized terms, such as heliophilic and sciaphilous, etc.

Replace “This forest is home to old fallow land” with – this forest consists of old fallow land – (“home” usually refers to species of animals or plants and not to land use).

Data collection methodology

I could not understand the term “re-ironing” used a few times in the text.

I initially found that the concept of “green” didn’t tell me very much; by the end of the paper I understood that it related to desiccation and could be related to harvesting techniques and environmental characteristics. It would be useful to briefly explain what “green” implies at first mention.

Data analysis and processing

“Highly disturbed” is repeated twice.

Here it becomes even more evident the constant change of terminology, and the variables mentioned here do not coincide with the terms mentioned in the title and other parts of the text.

It is not clear what “farm status (growth)” means.

Results

This section requires improved clarity and order.

Here again, the terms are variable.

In the first part of the results, it is not clear whether “abundances” refers to pooled data for the 7 rattan species, or if the data were considered separately for each species.

Discussion

The information about the genera and species of rattans would be better placed in the introduction.

Although various points are mentioned, the paper does not offer a clear idea of what problems are being faced for rattan conservation, particularly in relation to harvesting methods, demand, climate change, and local cultural perceptions and practices. These should be presented in the introduction and referred to in the discussion in relation to the results obtained.

