

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

Miramanni Mishkin¹

¹ University of Southern Maine

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Over all this is an interesting and useful paper. There are a few areas of improvement for more effective impact. In the introduction (first paragraph) the importance of rattan is stated briefly but not effectively underscored. In the second paragraph the diversity of the species is discussed but not how it ties into the use of the different species and which is most impacted by harvest in native habitat, or how they all might be, as a result of extraction and demand for the material (which is used for...? This should be mentioned). The species most used should be mentioned here as well. This will give greater meaning to the results— the results should underscore the points made in the intro. The importance of elevation is mentioned but these three elements are not effectively tied together. The third paragraph elaborates on the disturbances caused by the selective harvest currently considered unsustainable and mentioned in the second paragraph. However, again, this and the themes mentioned prior do not thread together in a way that brings the reader to comprehension of the common thread of rattan importance to the ecosystem, diversity of rattan, and harvest impact. The information is good, the theme of the research just needs to be clarified.

It may be wise to cut much of the overview of the genus and stick to the specific points that the paper is trying to highlight, so as not to detract from the impact of the researchers' efforts in Nkoltang. Thus the paper should probably start with the 12th paragraph (providing the necessary background to preface it but concisely and specifically). There are also terms (like dipterocarp and heliophilic) that might not be clear to all readers and should be defined if they are indeed necessary to the background and understanding of rattan distribution and diversity. The entire paragraphs about areas where rattan is found can be distilled to a sentence or few, rather than confusing the reader about where to focus attention until 12 or 13 paragraphs into the introduction. The introduction should probably be distilled into only 600 words or so.

The study area is described as anthropogenic. This should be explained more clearly. In the "choice of study sites" section, the information provided there makes for a perfect introduction. That first paragraph should be moved to the introduction and the entire intro should be tailored around that and the other pertinent info to those assertions in the current intro. The rest should be omitted to assure a concise, impactful guidance of the reader into the rattan study.

The choice of study sites isn't described in terms of categories or how they were chosen or what quantity of sites. This should be corrected.

The data classes should be mentioned before discussion of sampling. Data analysis should be described more clearly in

terms of what constituted the data that resulted in the tables, histograms, etc., and how it was analyzed statistically— in other words, the second paragraph should be first and the section does not need to be broken into 2 paragraphs.

The formatting in the results should be reviewed for consistency (see bold words). The reporting of the results appears sound. There is some repetition in the inventory numbers, which should be corrected and mitigated.

Again, over all, this is an interesting study and had implications for similar studies. The information simply needs to be distilled to the specific and pertinent points, rather than a copious amount of information that covers more areas than the species that are of importance and how to measure and monitor them. It seems that the local managers should also be given a bit more credit for their management and mentioned in terms of management of the genus elsewhere or at the very least a plug for other researchers to investigate their methods, to inform management elsewhere it would be effective.