

Wetlands Exploitation along the Bafoussam – Bamenda Road Axis of the Western Highlands of Cameroon

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ABSTRACT This paper is focused on how wetlands have been exploited for economic and environmental reasons and some resultant environmental consequences. The rapid colonization of these wet areas is the result of an ever rising density of population and continuous cultivation throughout the year. Since water is essential for plant and animal life, it is important to figure out the possibilities of regulating population pressure and wetland utilization since the water table in these wetlands and the surrounding areas within this region falls drastically in the dry season. The study utilized field surveys and measurements, interviews, questionnaires and secondary sources, data was generated and analyzed on the exploitation of these ecological niches. For the short term economic benefits, the exploitation of these areas is good but the environmental and hydrological implications in the long run are likely be disastrous. An alternative landuse for this area has to be adopted in order to maintain sustainably the importance of these wetlands ecosystem. The application of chemical fertilizers should be regulated as they contaminate and eventually pollute water bodies with increasing aspects of poor water quality in the area.