STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MANGROVES IN A PART OF THE NIGER DELTA OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Urbanisation has proven to be a major culprit of mangrove destruction and degradation over the years. Information on mangrove structure, being an indicator of dynamism and growth, and a prerequisite for mangrove forest management, has been limited. The study examined the mangrove structural characteristics in western Niger Delta, Nigeria. Girth, dbh, height, basal area, tree density and crown diameter were determined from 20m by 20m quadrats in Agge, Bururtu, Kurutie and Opuama and a control site in Ifie. The mangroves in the control, showed evidence of being relatively young, having the lowest mean structural values. The mean tree density and complexity index however ranked highest. Kurutie and Agge showed signs of relative maturity while Burutu ranked the least developed. The control and study site parameters were not significantly different at $p<0.05$, on testing with ANOVA. This study recommends that mangrove conservation parks be established in Kurutie and Agge.

Keywords: Mangroves, Structure, Dynamism, Succession, Conservation