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THE FISH AND FISHERIES OF THE LOWER VOLTA MANGROVE SWAMPS IN GHANA

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Abstract

The fish and fisheries of the Lower Volta mangrove swamps were studied to provide data for the formulation of management strategies to sustain utilisation of the fishery resources in the area. Thirty-eight fin fishes and 14 shell fishes species were encountered during the study period. *Gerres melanopterus*, *Clarias anguillaris*, *Liza falcipinnis*, *Mugil curema* and *Sarotherodon melanotheron* were the most abundant fin fish species constituting 20.2%, 18.7%, 9.7%, 9.6% and 8.5% respectively of the total catch. Areas with more extensive mangrove cover had higher species diversity than areas with sparse or no mangrove vegetation. The length frequency distribution of all the species considered indicated a higher proportion of juveniles in the catch emphasizing the nursery role of the study area. A conservative estimate indicated fish yield of between 450 and 500 mt y^{-1} valued at about US$400,000-450,000 from the area. Factors affecting fish yield and recommendations for sustainable development and exploitation of the fishery resource are discussed, as part of an integrated approach for the management of the area.