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Mangrove Ecosystem Services Valuation: State of the Literature

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INTRODUCTION

To guide their decision making, marine and coastal managers are increasingly using monetary value estimates of marine ecosystem services (Börger et al. 2014). These estimates reflect various economic valuation methods. Some rely on market values of ecosystem service outputs and substitutes, and some rely on non-market approaches (Barbier et al. 2011).

A growing body of literature provides estimates of ecosystem service values derived from mangroves. If this literature is to be useful in decision making, it must have a solid foundation of value estimates. This paper identifies gaps in data and knowledge regarding mangrove ecosystem service valuations and recommends ways that future research could advance understanding of mangrove ecology, ecosystem services valuation, and conservation.

METHODS

To identify gaps in knowledge and data on mangrove ecosystem service valuations, this analysis considers studies of mangrove ecosystem services values in the Marine Ecosystem Services Partnership (MESP) database.¹ These 72 mangrove valuation studies included peer-reviewed journal articles, institutional reports, and academic theses.

This analysis reports the studies' methodology, valued ecosystem services, assessed region, and inclusion of valuation estimates; it does not track each study's total number of reported values. Mangrove valuation methods are characterized as market-based valuation, stated preference, revealed preference, methods, or synthesis of existing literature. These methods, listed in Table 1, were used in at least one study reviewed herein, and they include both economic valuation and other methods.

Two recent meta-analyses of mangrove value estimates were consulted to gauge the completeness of the MESP library. Salem and Mercer (2012) reviewed 44 mangrove valuation studies; Brander et al. (2012), 41 studies. These meta-analyses may have considered studies in the MESP database and deemed them unusable for their purpose. Although the MESP database contains many of the studies in the meta-analyses, not all studies in these analyses could be located. Some studies do not exist in digital form or are otherwise inaccessible.

¹ <u>http://marineecosystemservices.org/explore.</u>

Table 1. Categories of Valuation Methods.

Category	Method	Description of Method	
Market-based valuation (MV)	Market value Change in productivity (CP), net factor income (NFI) Avoided cost (AC),	Estimates economic values of ecosystem products or services that are bought and sold in commercial markets (e.g., fish, timber, crops) Estimates economic values of ecosystem products or services that contribute to the production of commercially marketed goods (e.g., fish nursery function) Estimates economic values on the basis of costs of avoided damages	
	Avoided cost (AC), avoided damages (AD), substitute price (SP), replacement cost (RC)	resulting from lost ecosystem services, costs of replacing ecosystem services, or costs of providing substitute services (e.g., storm protection)	
Non-market valuation - stated preference (NMV-SP)	Contingent valuation (CV)	Estimates economic values of virtually any ecosystem or environmental service by asking people to directly state their willingness to pay for it given a hypothetical scenario; proper methods include real budget constraints to better replicate actual economic decisions; most widely used method for estimating non-use, or "passive use" values	
	Choice modeling (CM)	Estimates economic values of ecosystem or environmental services by asking people to make tradeoffs among them; willingness to pay is inferred from tradeoffs that include cost as an attribute	
Non-market valuation - Revealed preference (NMV-RP)	Travel cost (TC)	Estimates values associated with ecosystems or sites used for recreation through willingness to pay to travel to visit the sites	
Synthesis of existing studies (SES)	Meta-analysis (MA) Citation (CIT)	Combines results of multiple studies to infer potentially robust estimates and identify patterns, often using statistical methods Directly cites the results of another study	
	Benefit transfer (BT)	Estimates economic values by transferring existing benefit estimates from studies of another location or issue	
	Ecosystem value coefficient (EVC)	Derives ecosystem service values by multiplying the area of land use types by value coefficients, which are based on global averages (Costanza et al. 1997)	

RESULTS

The geographic coverage of mangroves and the geographic representation of the studies are asymmetrical. For instance, Africa is home to 22% of the world's mangroves, yet only 7% of mangrove valuation studies focus on this part of the world (Table 2). African mangroves exist in both West Africa (i.e., the coast from Guinea down to Nigeria and Cameroon) and East Africa (i.e., Kenya, Tanzania, and Mozambique). The MESP could locate only five studies for the entire continent, and all were on the east coast; none of these studies valued mangrove resources in West Africa. The Americas are home to 30% of the world's mangrove areas but make up only 20% of the valuation literature. The Caribbean and the eastern coast of South America are home to dense stands of mangrove forests. None of the studies the MESP found were for Caribbean islands.

	Percent of World's Mangroves	Percent of Studies			
Africa	22%	7%			
Americas	30%	19%			
Asia	38%	63%			
Pacific	10%	10%			

Table 2. Comparison of Mangrove Coverage to Presence in Valuation Literature.

Note: Percentages are calculated from the average of mangrove coverage values presented in the following *Sources:* Saenger et al. (1983), Fisher and Spalding (1993), Spalding et al. (1997), Giri et al. (2011), and Hutchison et al. (2013).

Pendleton et al. (2007) argue that a literature that includes valuation estimates from different methods may yield results that are more robust than a literature with valuation estimates from a single method. The most common methods for valuing mangrove ecosystem services are market-based methods, followed by syntheses of existing studies, and stated preference methods (Figure 1). Stated preference methods were applied more frequently in Asia and the Pacific than in other regions. Studies using non-market valuation revealed preference methods are lacking in Africa and the Pacific region, and these methods have not been used to estimate global mangrove ecosystem service values.

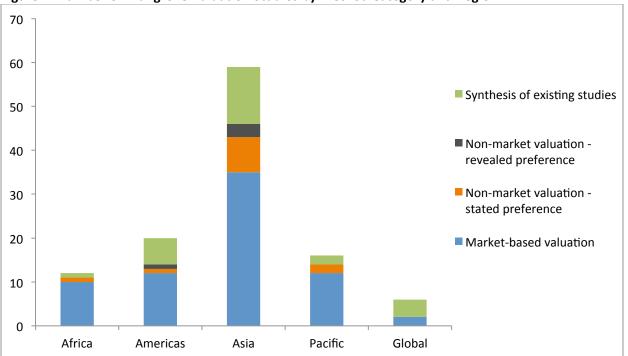
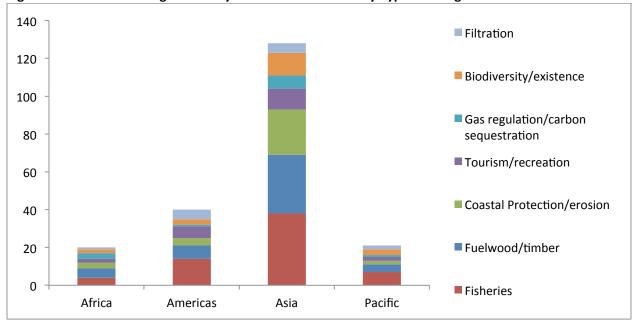


Figure 1. Number of Mangrove Valuation Studies by Method Category and Region.

Across all regions, a wide variety of ecosystem services produced by mangroves have been valued. Studies of the fisheries value of mangroves tend to be most common (Figure 2).





Mangrove ecosystem service valuation increased around the turn of the 21st century, but with one notable exception, it has decreased since 2010. The sharp increase in 2013 can perhaps be attributed to the emerging international attention to coastal "blue carbon" (Pendleton et al. 2012; Siikamäki et al. 2013). No pattern in the types of methods applied over time is discernable. Although the number of valuations has generally increased (figures 4 and 5), the proportion of studies focusing on fisheries and fuel wood have decreased.

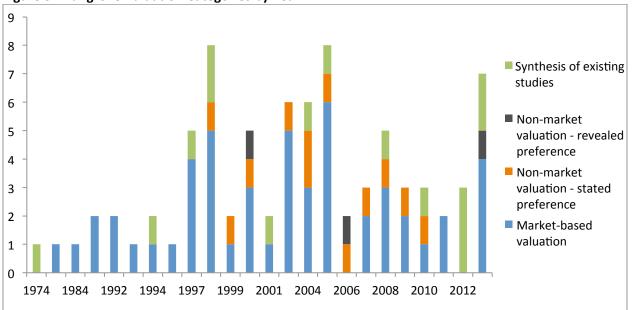
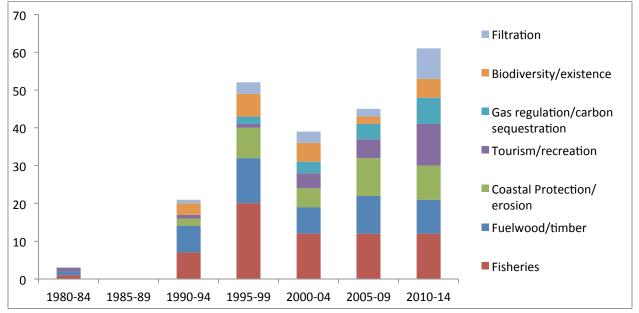
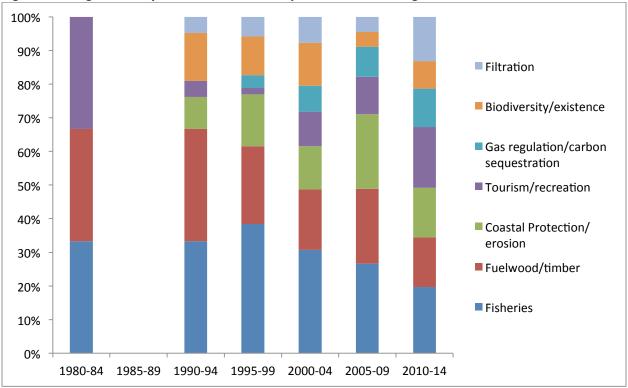


Figure 3. Mangrove Valuation Categories by Year.









CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The importance of mangroves and the ecosystem services they provide is increasingly recognized. But additional research is needed if mangroves are to be managed in a way that fully recognizes their economic contribution in different settings throughout the world. To date, mangrove valuations have primarily focused on Asia, particularly southeast Asia; they are underrepresented for Africa, the Americas, and the Pacific. These valuations reflect marketed and non-marketed services. Most prevalent by far are studies of the value of fisheries, followed by fuelwood and coastal protection. Since 2010, carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas regulation have emerged as services of interest, perhaps due to growing emphasis on "blue carbon" from coastal and marine ecosystems.

In the recent literature on mangroves ecosystem services values, fisheries and wood harvesting values dominate, as do market-based measures. Because market values and other revealed preference measures are often preferred to stated preferences, the focus on market-based measures, in and of itself, is not necessarily of concern. But if it represents a bias toward estimation of the easiest-to-value services, it indicates a research shortcoming.

Valuation assessments can help advance conservation by informing decision makers of the full value of threatened habitats. With respect to mangroves, this analysis points to the following research agenda:

• Increase valuation studies in western and eastern Africa, the Caribbean, and South America. The critical knowledge gap in these areas could lead to the undervaluing of mangroves in development and conservation decisions. Filling this gap will require increased awareness and resolve from local communities, resource managers, and economists as well as funding for new research.

- Give attention to a wide diversity of types of mangrove ecosystem services. Since the early 2000s, the focus has shifted from fisheries and forestry services to other services, notably, carbon sequestration. But studies of some services, especially biodiversity, are few, particularly in the Americas, Africa, and the Pacific, where the importance of shoreline protection is likely to be locally important.
- Provide more and better estimates for mangrove ecosystem services for regional and national natural capital accounting. Without a better global distribution of mangrove valuation studies, estimates of the natural capital value of mangrove stocks cannot be estimated accurately and precisely for many places.

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