



Cameroon lists its part of the Rio del Rey Estuary

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Cameroon



The Secretariat is very pleased to report that Cameroon has designated its 5th Site of International

Importance, located in the department of Ndian, at the edge of the Gulf of Guinea. As summarized by Cathleen Cybele, Ramsar's Assistant Advisor for Africa, the Rio Del Rey Estuary is a transboundary site between Cameroon and Nigeria and it hosts approximately 10% of all West African mangroves and half of Cameroon's mangroves. The Rio Del Rey mangroves are a uniquely important habitat for endemic and threatened species such as the Giant frog, *Conraua goliath*, the West African manatee (*Trichechus senegalensis*) and the Dwarf crocodile (*Osteolaemus tetraspis*). It also offers a staging area for the migratory Lesser flamingo (*Phoeniconaias minor*) and for the Rachel's Malimbe (*Malimicus racheliae*).

The estuary provides crucial ecosystem services. This highly diverse site has a great biological importance as it hosts a spawning ground and nursery path for fish stocks and has a high hydrological value through recharge and discharge of underground water. It also plays an important role in water purification, sediment trapping and shoreline protection. In addition, the estuary supports local economy by supplying fish and timber. The main threat to this site is the alien invasive species *Nypa fruticans*, which is dominating the indigenous mangrove species (*Avicennia germinans*, *Conocarpus erectus*, *Rhizophora harrisonii*, *Rhizophora mangle* and the *Rhizophora racemosa*).



WWF International, through its Freshwater Programme and the WWF Cameroon Country Programme

Office, provided financial and technical assistance to the Government of Cameroon for the designation of this new Ramsar site.

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