

# **Investigation of the factors that contribute to degradation of Songor Ramsar and UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserve in Ghana**

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## **Abstract**

This study on the Songor Ramsar and UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserve in Ghana seeks to investigate the factors that contribute to degradation of Songor Ramsar and UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserve in Ghana through the administration of structured questionnaires using the drop-and-collect approach, face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. The study revealed that the ranking of natural resources and occupation of the area are based on the demarcated zones within which the community is situated. Salt, fisheries and arable lands were identified as the most important natural resource in the wetland. The results on environmental degradation of the wetlands in the Songor Ramsar site in Ghana made it clear that the underlying causes of environmental degradation in the Songor Ramsar site are mainly a combination of Institutional and policy failures. It was revealed that the problem of environmental degradation is a consequence of ineffective enforcement of bye-laws. A combination of several factors such as improper waste disposal, poor attitude of residents toward environmental conservation, wildfires and shoreline recession, inadequate public education on the impact of environmental degradation, fishing and farming activities were identified during the administration of structured questionnaire, face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. The other factors include overgrazing, over exploitation of mangroves, Predation, poaching and over fishing, uncontrolled sand and salt winning. Constraints and weaknesses to the implementation of regulations and laws with respect to conservation and protection of the wetlands identified during the study are lack of public education on the economic importance and the need to conserve the wetland, encroachment by developers, lack of enforcement of bye-laws, over-exploitation of mangroves and waste management.

**Keywords:** Wetland, Environmental degradation, Pollution, Songor Ramsar Site, Ghana