# [***Mangroves, world's unique ecosystems, declining at alarming level***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6618-HMD1-F11P-X433-00000-00&context=1516831)

Anadolu Agency (AA)

July 26, 2022 Tuesday

Copyright 2022 Andolu Ajansi Provided by Syndigate Media Inc. All Rights Reserved



**Length:** 821 words

**Byline:** Burak Bir |

**Body**

ANKARA

The crucial roles of ***mangroves*** and threats to these unique ecosystems are taking the global spotlight Tuesday on the occasion of the International Day for the Conservation of the ***Mangrove*** Ecosystem, or World ***Mangrove*** Day.

The international day, which has been celebrated on July 26 annually since 2015, aims to raise awareness of the importance of ***mangrove*** ecosystems as "a unique, special and vulnerable ecosystem."

Since ***mangroves*** grow along tropical coastlines and in saltwater environments on the boundary between land and sea, they are seen as a critical component of marine ecosystems, serving as nursery grounds for many aquatic species, including commercially important fish species.

***Mangroves*** also reduce the impacts of storms and keep coastal erosion under control as it is known that ***mangroves*** even reduced the impact of the 2004 Southeast Asian tsunami.

"***Mangroves*** act as a form of natural coastal defense against storm surges, tsunamis, rising sea levels and erosion. Their soils are highly effective carbon sinks, sequestering vast amounts of carbon," according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

UN figures indicate that a hectare of ***mangrove*** forest can store 3,754 tons of carbon, which is the equivalent of taking over 2,650 cars off the road for a year.

In total, the world's ***mangroves*** store carbon equivalent to over 21 gigatons of carbon dioxide.

Additionally, ***mangroves*** are home to a rich fauna, including 341 internationally threatened species ranging from tigers to seahorses.

***Mangroves*** vanishing

The area of ***mangrove*** habitat in the world is about 135,881 square kilometers (52,464 square miles), which represents a linear coverage of 11.96% of the world's total coastline according to data in 2016.

But these rich ecosystems, which also play a crucial role in climate change adaptation and mitigation, are under huge risk as they are disappearing three to five times faster than overall total forest losses.

"It is estimated that some countries lost more than 40% of their ***mangroves*** between 1980 and 2005, often due to coastal development," Audrey Azoulay, the director-general of UNESCO, said previously.

According to the latest statistics, these globally rare forests are found in 123 nations and territories but represent less than 1% of all tropical forests worldwide and less than 0.4% of the global forest estate.

These ecosystems are also threatened by conversion into aquaculture and agriculture and urban and resort development as well as rises in sea levels.

Since ***mangroves*** act as fish nurseries and homes to various species of animals, experts warn that shrinking ***mangroves*** may affect coastal communities which depend on fishing to earn a living in the long term.

If ***mangroves*** are destroyed, degraded or lost, large amounts of carbon dioxide would be released into the atmosphere, warn experts, adding carbon emissions from ***mangrove*** deforestation correspond to up to 10% of emissions from deforestation globally, despite only covering 0.7% of total land coverage.

It is also estimated that flood damage would increase by more than $65 billion, while 15 million more people would be flooded every year.

Urgent need for protection

To stem the alarming decline of ***mangroves***, international organizations including UN institutions and conservation non-governmental organizations (NGOs) continue their efforts towards protection by conducting a number of studies and projects as well as monitoring ***mangrove*** resources for conservation purposes.

A report titled The State of the World's ***Mangroves*** 2021 revealed that the greatest net losses of ***mangroves*** were in Southeast Asia, with 6%, and North and Central America and the Caribbean with 7%.

Meanwhile, Mexico, Indonesia, Brazil, Myanmar, Australia, Thailand, Mozambique, Malaysia, India and Bangladesh were the 10 countries worldwide with the largest gains in ***mangrove*** habitat extent between 1996 and 2016, noted the report, published by the Global ***Mangrove*** Alliance.

However, the extent of ***mangroves*** around the world decreased by 6,057 square kilometers (2,338 square miles) in total during same period.

To revive these vulnerable ecosystems, UNESCO carries out various projects, including the "Man and the Biosphere Program (MAB)" and the "International ***Blue Carbon*** Initiative" as well as the protection of ***mangroves*** by naming them "World Heritage sites."

The Global ***Mangrove*** Alliance is making efforts towards ***mangrove*** protection by using several tools.

Aiming at bringing together governments, NGOs, scientists and local communities, the alliance provides live maps of ***mangrove*** estates across the world.

"Green-Grey Infrastructure in the Philippines," "Land-use planning in Liberia" and "Valuing ***Blue Carbon*** in the Kaimana MPA" are among the alliance's projects.

The annual ***Mangrove*** Photography Awards is another initiative to raise awareness in this regard, launched by the US-based nonprofit ***Mangrove*** Action Project.

**Classification**

**Language:** ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** 400

**Subject:** SALTWATER ECOSYSTEMS (93%); COASTAL CONSERVATION (90%); WETLANDS CONSERVATION (90%); ANIMALS (89%); CLIMATE CHANGE (89%); DEFORESTATION (89%); ECOSYSTEM CONSERVATION (89%); ECOSYSTEMS & HABITATS (89%); EROSION (89%); FORESTRY & ENVIRONMENT (89%); FORESTS & WOODLANDS (89%); SEA LEVEL CHANGES (89%); UNITED NATIONS (89%); ACCIDENTS & DISASTERS (88%); EMISSIONS (88%); UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTIONS (87%); COASTAL AREA MANAGEMENT (78%); MAMMALS (78%); FISHES (77%); THREATENED & SENSITIVE SPECIES (77%); MARINE BIOLOGY (76%); LIFE FORMS (75%); OCEANS (75%); CLIMATOLOGY (74%); TSUNAMIS (74%); ASSOCIATIONS & ORGANIZATIONS (72%); CARBON CAPTURE & STORAGE (72%); GREENHOUSE GASES (70%); INDIAN OCEAN TSUNAMI (68%); STATISTICS (67%)

**Industry:** DEFORESTATION (89%); FORESTRY & ENVIRONMENT (89%); EMISSIONS (88%); ANIMAL AQUACULTURE (77%); AQUACULTURE (69%); RESORTS (50%)

**Load-Date:** July 27, 2022

**End of Document**