



FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

CELEBRATE GREATER AMANZULE WETLAND

Connecting Us All!

Greater Amanzule Wetland

The Greater Amanzule Wetlands (GAW) covers approximately 50,000 hectares of land stretching from the Ankobra Estuary in the Nzema East and the Ellembelle districts in Ghana, to the Tanoe-Ehy marsh at the Ivory Coast border. The GAW is rich in biodiversity and supports numerous livelihood activities. Over 50 communities comprising more than 7,000 farming and fishing families depend directly on the GAW resources for food, fuel-wood, fish, shell fish and drinking water. Recent flora and fauna surveys conducted by the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission recorded over 59 plant species with more than 59 percent covering peat swamps and mangrove forests. The faunal surveys identified 40 mammal species, 78 bird species and 17 amphibian and reptile species. The beaches connected to the GAW also present suitable sites for nesting of sea turtles.



Greater Amanzule Wetland showing CSLP Focal Communities

Why Are Wetlands Important?

- They serve as source of livelihood and safety net for fringe communities.
- Wetlands help improve surface water quality by filtering and retaining residential, agricultural, and urban wastes.
- They also buffer coastal areas against storm and wave damage and help stabilize shorelines.
- Coastal wetlands provide spawning grounds, nurseries, shelter, and food for finfish, shellfish, birds, and other wildlife.
- An acre of wetland can store 1-1.5 million gallons of floodwater.
- A kilometer of mangrove forest can reduce the height of storm surge by 50 centimeters.
- A hectare of mangrove forest is worth up to \$US 15,161 a year in disaster protection.

Why should we care about the Greater Amanzule Wetland?

The frequency of disasters worldwide has more than doubled in just 35 years, driven by climate- and weather-related hazards like flooding, tropical cyclones and droughts. UN Water estimates that 90 percent of all natural hazards are water-related. And the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicts even more extreme events going forward. The human toll is tragic: 1.35 million people died as a result of disasters between 1996 and 2015. Low-and middle-income countries account for 90 percent of

fatalities. In material terms, weather related disasters caused US \$3.3 trillion in damage between 1980 and 2014.

Research has revealed that a hectare of mangrove forest is worth up to \$US 15,161 a year in disaster protection. This is why the Greater Amanzule Wetland and its associated mangrove forest should be conserved. It is however worrying to know that despite the socio-economic, ecological and the disaster prevention characteristics of this unique wetland, it is yet to be recognized at the national level and accorded a deserving conservation status. It is even more worrying to know that the GAW is threatened by the influx of oil and gas companies in the Ellembelle and Jomoro districts, expansion of rubber plantations, population growth, urbanization in the Western Region, and mangrove deforestation for fuelwood.

How Do GAW Connect Us?

⊕ *Climate change*-Mangrove forests have been found to sequester more carbon than terrestrial forests. This unique feature may be why most of us may still be living despite the global warming.

⊕ *If you love fish* - many kinds of fish from salmon to striped bass, as well as lobster, shrimp, periwinkles, oysters and crabs, depend on coastal wetlands for places to live, feed, or reproduce.



A mangrove forest at Old Kablesuazo

⊕ *If you live near river hundreds of miles from the coast* - water flowing in that river most likely ends in a coastal wetland. Sometimes rivers contain pollutants, such as excess fertilizer or pesticides, which can be filtered by coastal wetlands before they reach the ocean. Unfortunately, large amounts of pollutants can overwhelm coastal wetlands, which can create problems for fish along the coast.

4 Things You Can Do for the Greater Amanzule Wetland

1. Participate in programs that help protect and restore wetlands. E.g. Helping to get GAW a formal conservation status.
2. Report illegal actions such as unauthorized fill or dredging activities to Community Conservation Committees, district conservation committees, Traditional Authorities or the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission.
3. Pick up litter and dispose in appropriate trash containers. Keep surface areas that wash into storm drains clean from toxic chemicals, fertilizers, and motor oil, which eventually reach and impair our wetlands.
4. Avoid wetlands if you are expanding your house or installing a shed.



A swamp forest at Ebonloa

For more information

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