

Spatial patterns in NTFPs collection

Viengkham District, Luang Prabang Province, Lao PDR

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Introduction

The spatial patterns of NTFP collection was investigated in three target villages of the Landscape Mosaics Project. The survey aimed at characterizing different NTFP collection practices across a gradient of accessibility, population pressure, ethnicity. The changes in NTFP collection and consumption patterns were also assessed through comparative analysis of villages corresponding different levels of land degradation.



Methods

The field work was conducted at village level:

1. Village meetings (#4) and participatory mapping
2. Focus group discussions (5 groups)
3. Interviews of households
4. Ground checking

Results

Land use, soil characteristics and topography are key characteristics taken into account by local farmers to identify suitable areas for collection of major NTFPs.

Land use types. Shifting cultivation land type is the most cited as collection area for the different species. This may reflect (i) the preference of certain highly used species like peuak meuak and broom grass for open spaces and light. It could also be explained by (ii) the perception of the villagers who collect wild species preferably on their upland fields or on the way to their fields. Lastly, the presence of species like broom-grass is an indicator of land degradation under intensive practice of slash-and-burn systems (fallows length < 4 years).

Soil types. Most species are found in humid soils and riparian forests (i.e. along streams).

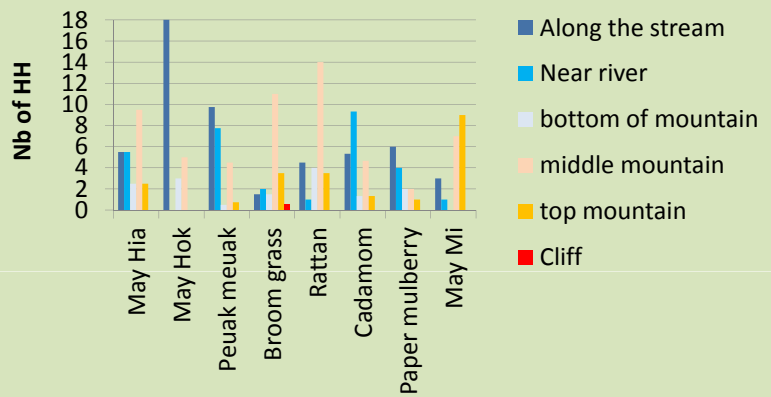


Figure 1. Ecology of the selected species, from average scores of HH surveys in target villages

Changes in NTFPs collection practices

The table below shows that local people are getting more interested in forest conservation as the overall forest quality is degrading in their village and wild resources are depleted. Conservation forest scores from villagers are higher than in the past (from 0.3 to 4) and are expected to increase in the future.

On the other hand, the use of forest resources for timber and firewood are decreasing in the future. These changes in the relative importance of landscape components for villagers will be further incorporated in biodiversity monitoring and land use planning processes.

Villages	Conservation Forest			Watershed protection F.		
	Past	Present	Future	Past	Present	Future
MM	1.28	2.55	3.36	2.81	3.37	3.88
VM	2.11	3.56	4.67	0.91	2.26	3.08
BM	1.37	2.72	3.67	1.21	3.9	5.44
PD	0.34	3.87	4.91	0.99	2.97	3.79



Figure 2. Mapping of NTFPs collection areas and intensity (from HH interviews)



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