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## **The Impact of Human Activities on Biodiversity Conservation in a Coastal Wetland in Ghana**

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### **Abstract**

The study was undertaken at the Muni-Pomadze coastal wetland in the Central Region of Ghana. The wetland, located about 56 km west of Accra, is an important habitat for wildlife of both local and global conservation significance. This study investigated the effects of human activities (e.g. farming, hunting, fuelwood harvesting, etc.) on the environment and biodiversity conservation in the area, as well as the implications of such activities for the future of the “Aboakyer” Festival of the local Effutu people. The festival is an important ecotourist attraction which is of economic and sociocultural significance for the local people and the country at large. The methodology involved interviews with a cross-section of the local people, the organisation of durbars, and focus group discussions (FGD). The results indicated that, among the various human activities undertaken in the area, fuelwood harvesting, bushfire setting, hunting, and farming had the greatest impact on biodiversity conservation through degradation of the wetland over the years. Furthermore, about 95% of the respondents regarded the “Aboakyer” Festival as a major socioeconomic activity in the area. There, however, appeared to be little awareness of both “western” and traditional methods of wildlife conservation. The following were recommended for the improvement of the current status of the wetland and its sustainable management: (i) enhancement of local participation in biodiversity conservation initiatives, (ii) initiation of public education and awareness campaigns, (iii) integration of traditional and modern knowledge system of biodiversity conservation, (iv) re-afforestation, (v) introduction of alternative forms of biomass energy, (vi) provision of incentive packages for implementing agencies, and (vii) provision of alternative sources of income for the local population.