

# Review of: "Human and Environmental Factors Shape Tree Species Assemblages in West African Tropical Forests"

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**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.

I have read the article "Human and Environmental Factors Shape Tree Species Assemblages in West African Tropical Forest," and I find no reason not to publish.

## Comments

A potential sampling bias exists between sample intensity and distances from paths or access points. More samples will be available closer to access points than those further away, which will be less accessible. This will have a significant effect on the results in studies where the impacts of anthropogenic effects are investigated.

Better techniques are available in GIS to calculate distances than Google Earth.

Very little information is given about the environmental variables. The study does not explicitly list the environmental data used, or I missed it.

Environmental Vars: DNAE, DCHP, geographical distance (Euclidean distance), stem density, forest composition, and....? Please provide a table listing the environmental variables with basic statistics so that the reader can understand the geographical setting of the study. Also indicate which variables were the highest importance variables used in model 3. I don't regard stem density and forest composition as environmental variables. Are these not intrinsic characteristics of the forest sampled and rather a result of anthropogenic impact and environmental conditions?

The concept of using stem density is unclear, especially since presence-absence data was used. What is the unit of measurement, and is it per species or in total?

What does "The effect of stem density on total beta diversity and turnover of edible species might translate to higher migration of the species in space" mean? Can the authors please clarify?

In other forest ecosystems, historical and current logging has had a significant impact on species composition. What is the relationship between logging and loss of species? The author alluded to that but did not include logging impact.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the paper.

