

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 want to congratulate the authors on a well-conducted study and a well-written paper. As the authors have mentioned, measuring spatial ecological patterns is difficult, and ecologists employ different methods to achieve this; therefore, my comments will not be about the approach used in the study, although it is a valid and well thought out approach.

I wish the authors had classified the plant species beyond just edible and non-edible, but also according to the economic value of the tree species (for instance, some trees are preferentially harvested for fuelwood, or for smoking fish and wild meat, etc.). I also wish they had considered not just the distance to the closest human presence but the distance to market centers as well. People who live close to market centers would likely harvest timber and non-timber products for revenue purposes many times over compared to those who live far from markets. Having lived in this part of the world, I find that these two factors play a significant role in the utilization of forest resources.