

## Round Wood Export from Southern Tanzanian Coastal Forests

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Perhaps the most urgent conservation challenge facing the coastal forests of southern Tanzania is that of round wood logging and export. This logging is affecting public land forests and also forest reserves, including those where forest management plans have been agreed that prevent logging.

A visit to the forests of Rufiji District in late November 2003 showed the extent of the problem. Over a period of two days nine large lorries, often with a trailer, each carrying many tens of large logs were observed in Ikwiriri, Nyamwage, Ngulakula and on the road between Kibiti and Dar es Salaam. Moreover, in the villages both north and south of the Mkapa bridge piles of large logs were ready for collection by the lorries. In some villages there were over 100 round wood logs ready for transport. We also visited Namakutwa/Namuete, Kiwengoma, Ngumburuni and

logged, despite the agreed management plan that did not allow logging. Transect data from Namakutwa indicated a logging intensity of 29 trees per hectare of forest, some 14.2% of the trees counted along the transects. Large numbers of logs were observed in Mbwara Village adjacent to Namakutwa Forest Reserve and a tractor was observed in the village moving logs. One characteristic of the logging was that only the large basal part of the trunk had been removed and the rest of the tree, including large branches with much useful timber, was left. The conclusion was that only the highest value portions of the most valuable tree species were being illegally harvested from this forest reserve.

Available information indicated that many of the logs were transported to Dar es Salaam under the cover of darkness. Further south round wood log movements to



a) Logs on truck at Nyamwage village; Photo by: Nike Doggart



b) Round wood logs ready for collection at Mbwara village close to Namakutwa Forest Reserve; Photo by: Nike Doggart



c) Logged tree within Namakutwa national Forest Reserve; Photo by: Nike Doggart



d) Logged Mpingo tree within woodland elements in Ngumburuni national forest reserve; Photo by: Nike Doggart

Ruhoi forest reserves, including those where WWF operated a forest conservation project until June 2001, and where there was no logging when those projects terminated. The WWF project worked with District Authorities and the villages of the Matumbi and Kichi Hills to gazette new Village and Local Area Authority Reserves and also to develop management plans for Namakuwa/Namuete and Kiwengoma national forest reserves. The November 2003 visits showed that Namakutwa/Namuete forest reserve was being heavily

ports of Kilwa and Lindi were also reported. Links with traders in the Far East were suggested and a connection to Zanzibar was indicated by the presence of Zanzibar registered lorries carrying logs north towards Dar es Salaam.

The scale of the logging was well publicised in the media. The Forestry and Beekeeping Division responded by tightening a ban on round wood logging and export (based on the ban of J.A. 109/168/01/134 of

September 2003). However, the ban proved difficult to enforce as some of the logging was legitimate and from public land forests. The ban was therefore overturned and round wood logging and export was once again permitted in February 2004.

It might be argued that the logging is a source of revenue for impoverished Districts and poor people in

wood once it is processed into finished products.

As it is now some months since this visit to the area, and because round wood export is allowed once more, further monitoring of this issue is needed. In particular there is a need to understand better the rates of logging (legal and illegal) in the forest reserves and general lands of Rufiji, Kilwa and Lindi Districts, and the degree to which these logs are being exported from Tanzania as relatively low-value round wood. A further issue worthy of investigation is the link between the new round wood export industry in Tanzania and the recent ban on logging in China. The demands from within China for timber are now being met from outside the country, and this may include some of the wood from the coastal forests and woodlands of eastern Tanzania.



*e) Logging truck between Kibiti and Dar es Salaam; Photo by: Nike Daggart*

these parts of southern Tanzania. However the scale of these benefits is not known, and the export of high value timber as round wood logs does not allow processing to be developed within Tanzania, the only sure way to capture the full value of the timber. It is also likely that those owning the transport and involved in selling the logs outside of Tanzania have accumulated much of the benefit from selling this wood resource, which is probably only a fraction of the true value of the



*f) Named log in Mbwara village log pile. Photo by: Nike Daggart*