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# Development and conservation of Philippine mangroves: institutional issues

J.H Primavera

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### Abstract

The decline of Philippine mangroves from half a million hectares in 1918 to only 120,000 ha in 1994 may be traced to local exploitation for fuelwood and conversion to agriculture, salt beds, industry and settlements. But brackishwater pond culture, whose history is intertwined with that of mangroves, remains the major cause of loss. The paper discusses the institutional issues of aquaculture as development strategy, low economic rent of mangroves, overlapping bureaucracy and conflicting policies, corruption, weak law enforcement and lack of political will relevant to this decline. Recommended policies are based on these institutional factors and the experiences in mangrove rehabilitation including community-based efforts and government programs such as the 1984 Central Visayas Regional Project. These recommendations include conservation of remaining mangroves, rehabilitation of degraded sites including

abandoned ponds, mangrove-friendly aquaculture, community-based and integrated coastal area management, and provision of tenurial instruments.



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## Keywords

Aquaculture; Brackishwater ponds; Community-based management; Integrated coastal area/zone management; Tenurial/property rights

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