

# Mangroves are important.

*Mangroves provide important resources to our communities and vital services to the environment.*

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## RESOURCES



**FOOD**  
People eat fish, crabs, and clams that live in mangrove swamps. Many reef fish also spend part of their lives in the mangroves.



**MATERIALS**  
Mangrove wood is used to build things and make tools, fishing gear, and crafts. Leaves of mangrove palm are used to thatch roofs.



**RECREATION**  
Beaches, picnic areas, and channels among mangroves are wonderful places for children and adults to play, enjoy the outdoors, and learn.



**MEDICINE**  
Certain local medicines are obtained from mangrove trees and other plants that live among them.



**FUEL**  
In some places, mangrove wood is used to make fire for cooking. This is not a good practice because it destroys mangroves.



**FISHERIES**  
Mangroves are very productive places, with many fish, crabs, and clams. Some fishermen sell their catch and make income to support their families.

## SERVICES



**COASTAL PROTECTION**  
Mangroves along coasts reduce the forces of waves and winds. They protect the environment and human communities from storms and floods.



**TRAPPING SEDIMENT**  
Mangrove roots trap sediment (loose mud and sand) washed from the land by rains and rivers. This causes the ground around mangroves to build up.



**RESISTING EROSION**  
Mangrove root systems tightly hold the ground. That prevents mud and soil from being eroded (washed away) by waves and currents.



**TRAPPING NUTRIENTS**  
Water running off from land also brings nutrients. Nutrients stick to mud in the mangroves and become food for microbes and other local living things.



**FILTERING WATER**  
Excess sediment and nutrients are bad for corals and other animals. By trapping sediment and nutrients, mangroves clean the water and protect the ecosystem.



**UNIQUE HABITAT**  
Mangroves are valued for their unique biodiversity. Many plants and animals – including rare and endangered species in water and on land – live in mangrove swamps.



**NURSERIES**  
Murky water and entangled roots give young fish places to hide from fish and birds that try to eat them. That makes mangroves excellent nursery areas for fish and other animals from nearby reefs.



**CARBON SINK**  
Mangroves absorb large quantities of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and turn it into organic material. Storing of carbon in the mangroves reduces the greenhouse effect and climate change.