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## [Ecuador: Action to save mangroves in Guayas](#)

Industrial shrimp farming is one of the direct causes of the deforestation of mangroves in the tropics. In Ecuador the level of destruction caused by the 1970s and mid 1980s shrimp production boom continues unabated, even though a law for the protection of mangroves was approved in 1995. Nowadays there are in Ecuador 40,000 hectares of ponds which have affected 70% of the country's mangrove area and practically all of its estuaries in the Pacific Ocean shore. Local economies have been disrupted. The successive Ecuadorian governments have been supporting this destructive activity --trumpeted as the "Blue Revolution"-- by granting it land concessions, building infrastructure to favour the transport of the products, offering subsidies, etc. The "Trolley" Law passed in late 2000 establishes that present beneficiaries of concessions in mangroves and beaches where shrimp ponds are built can become owners of the land. This means the complete loss of sovereignty of the Ecuadorian state over such a valuable resource.

A new case of destruction has been recently denounced by the members of a local crab-catchers association. This time it is at the Parroquia Naranjal in the western Province of Guayas. At a place called "Granja del Mar" near the River San Pablo, mangroves are being cut down for the construction of shrimp ponds.

The above is happening in spite of the fact that in July 2000 the Crab-catchers Association "6 de Julio" was granted by the Ministry of Environment a concession for the use of 1,666 hectares of mangroves. To their surprise, their legally-obtained concession area was invaded by outside agents --presumably linked to the shrimp industry-- who have already destroyed 70 hectares of mangroves with the aim of setting up industrial shrimp farming infrastructure. Local dwellers have requested the intervention of the environmental authorities and of the Forest Agency of Guayas, but the situation still remains unchanged, and destruction continues.

The Ecuadorian National Coordination for the Defense of Mangroves --an NGO coalition created to unite efforts to that aim-- is asking for international solidarity to defend this precious ecosystem, which is also the source of livelihoods for a local community. Those interested in expressing their support, please contact: FUNDECOL [fundecol@ecuanex.net.ec](mailto:fundecol@ecuanex.net.ec)

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