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## [Chile: more than scientific evidence on plantations' impacts](#)

When confronted with allegations that plantations entail social and environmental impacts, most foresters will argue that there's no scientific evidence to support such allegations. For us, the following testimony from Ruperto Ramos Antiqueo, a Mapuche from Southern Chile, has much more weight than most so-called scientific studies:

"When in past times I visited those mountains, there was an abundance of native trees everywhere: elm, 'hualle', oak, hazel. As plantations arrived the forest was lost. We used to walk about eight kilometres to arrive there. We went there to get plants, fruits and animals for food, such as rabbits, hares and birds. There were many. Nowadays, because of plantations, the birds have disappeared. I feel sad when I go there. There used to be deep water, good for bathing and drinking. We strolled all day long looking for fruits and enjoying nature since that was nice; everything was normal. There was no reason for fear. All was peaceful. But now, as soon as one enters the area, one can feel the danger, because the guard can seize you, or make his dogs attack you or shoot you. This is what they do nowadays. There is a water shortage for the communities living downstream, where there used to be wetlands that could be crossed only through bridges. Now one can easily cross them walking on the stone beds. Communities now lack water and for that reason families are abandoning their lands. Plantations have invaded them. Birds are also flying away because there is no place for them, there is no food because the trees that provided them with fruit have turned into pines and eucalyptus. There is no more food for them. Several species of birds have disappeared, especially pigeons and 'chucaos' that are nowhere to be seen. Foxes are also rarely seen. It is a sad thing to go there, to observe how it used to be and what it is like now. One can see entire mountains that have been set on fire, their waters have gone . . ."

Source: "Pueblo mapuche, bosque nativo y plantaciones forestales", by Rodrigo Catalán and Ruperto Ramos (forthcoming book)