

# JOURNEY AMONGST MANGROVES



THE INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER ORGANIZATION  
*and*  
THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR MANGROVE ECOSYSTEMS

# *Journey amongst Mangroves*

Mangroves are plants that grow between the sea and the land. These unusual plants survive in an ever changing environment, affected by the tides and the fresh water run-off from the land. All mangroves tolerate, to a greater or lesser extent, salt water surrounding their roots. These plants are mainly found on sheltered coastlines, deltas, estuaries and lagoons in tropical countries around the world. Mangrove wetlands are remarkably diverse and are home to a valuable range of animal, bird, fish and plant life.

People who live on the tropical coasts and river estuaries of the world have had a long association with mangroves. Sustainable use of the mangroves evolved with time and they became an important resource for the local people. Yet in recent times vast areas of mangrove land have been destroyed or seriously degraded by the overriding needs of agriculture and urban development as coastal populations have dramatically expanded.

Many scientists, planners, governments and international agencies have become aware over the past twenty years that the thoughtless widespread destruction of mangrove wetlands was removing a valuable biological and economic resource. This prompted a surge in research and a plea for better management. Today, there is more appreciation of the importance of mangroves, but the perception still lingers that mangrove wetlands are little more than wastelands.

*Journey amongst Mangroves* takes people without any background in biology or ecology into the unusual world of the mangroves. After an introduction to the composition, structure and function of mangrove wetlands, the book goes on to look at the use, value and management of mangroves. The tensions between conservation and exploitation are exposed and the social consequences of non-sustainable use are revealed.

*Journey amongst Mangroves* informs the reader of the importance of mangrove wetlands and emphasises the need to manage them intelligently to prevent future damage to this important natural resource. The coastal dwellers of the world require the mangroves as a sustained resource and this will be achieved only when the value of the mangroves is fully appreciated.

*Journey amongst Mangroves* is part of a trilogy being produced by the International Society for Mangrove Ecosystems and the International Tropical Timber Organization to promote awareness of the importance of mangroves. The other two parts of the trilogy are: *A World Mangrove Atlas* and *Restoration of Mangrove Ecosystems*.

*Front Cover:*

*Mangrove roots, Ponape, Micronesia – David Moore 1968*



*Mangrove forest, Weipa, North Queensland, Australia.*

# JOURNEY AMONGST MANGROVES

COLIN FIELD

THE INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER ORGANIZATION  
*and*  
THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR MANGROVE ECOSYSTEMS

*Rain falls, winds blow, plants bloom, leaves mature and are blown away, these phenomena are all inter-related with causes and conditions, and are brought about by them, and disappear as the causes and conditions change.*

## The teachings of Buddha

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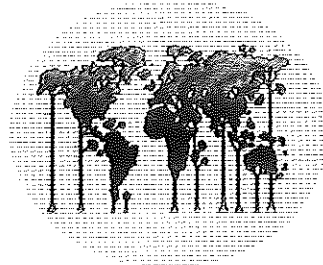
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Cover photograph by David Moore  
*Mangrove roots, Ponape, Micronesia - 1968*

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