

Local community groups dedicate International Mangrove Ecosystem Protection Day to saving important mangrove cockles

Title On July 26th, community-based organizations and NGOs in Ecuador, such as C-CONDEM (the National Coordinating Organization for the Protection of Mangrove Ecosystems) celebrated the 2010 International Mangrove Ecosystem Protection Day under the slogan LET'S RECOVER THE MANGROVE COCKLE! Outreach and awareness activities took place in all coastal provinces and in the capital, Quito. C-CONDEM launched its campaign to raise awareness of threats to mangrove ecosystems and associated species, and in particular, to mangrove cockles. Campaign activities include the planting of mangroves in areas affected by logging, meetings with indigenous and traditional communities that depend on mangrove ecosystem, cultural events at schools to raise awareness of the importance of the conservation and restoration of mangrove forests, all to be accompanied by a delicious variety of dishes prepared with exquisite mangrove cockles. The mangrove cockles *Anadara tuberculosa* and *A. similis* are dependent on Ecuador's coastal mangroves and estuaries and play an important role in the livelihoods of coastal communities, and the Ecuadorian economy as a whole. However, they are threatened by over-exploitation, and loss and degradation of mangrove habitat, in part due to unsustainable aquaculture practices by large-scale shrimp farming. Follow news of the campaign (in Spanish) and learn more about what of local communities are doing in Ecuador to sustainably manage mangrove ecosystems at: <http://www.ccondem.org.ec/boletin.php?c=939> Photo credit: Columbus GV Team (under the Common Common Licence at Flickr)