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Mangroves disappearing faster than land-based forests The destruction of the world's mangrove forests is happening up to four times faster than the world's land-based forests, according to a new United Nations report. A study commissioned by the U.N. Environmental Program (UNEP) reports that one fifth (around 35,500 square kilometers) of the world's mangroves -- forests straddling both land and sea -- have been lost since 1980. Although the study reports that annual destruction has slowed to 0.7 percent a year, the authors of the "[World Atlas of Mangroves](#)" report warn that continued coastal destruction and shrimp farming could cause financial and ecologic havoc. Studies estimate mangroves generate between U.S.\$2000 to \$9000 per hectare annually from fishing -- much more than the aquaculture, agriculture and tourism, which the U.N. says are the biggest drivers of mangrove loss. Achim Steiner, U.N. Under-Secretary General and Executive Director, U.N. Environment Program (UNEP), said in a statement: "This atlas brings our attention onto mangroves and puts them up front and central, plotting where they are, describing where they have been lost, and underlining the immense costs those losses have had for people as well as nature." Mangroves cover around 150,000 square kilometers and are found in 123 countries worldwide. The biggest concentration (21 percent) of the world's mangroves is in Indonesia, with Brazil home to around nine percent and Australia, seven percent. [Follow the original news story [here](#)] Photo credit: ben.ramirez (Flickr.com under the [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License](#))