

MAPPING OF LITTORAL VEGETATION OF THE SOUTH-EAST  
COAST OF SRI LANKA

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Over the past few decades, conservation oriented studies of the coastal zone in Sri Lanka have gradually become a necessity for various development activities and nature conservancy. This trend has not been reflected in the studies of vegetation of the island, although the 1700 km long coastal belt has been endangered by various socio-economic malpractices. The reason for this has been that studies on vegetation have focussed primarily on montane grassland, forest and ecological factors. Studies of littoral plant communities have been few among these studies.

Considering the paucity of both academic and applied studies of the littoral plant communities of Sri Lanka, this study aims at mapping the littoral plant communities along selected areas of the South- East coast.

The primary technique used in mapping of vegetation is based on the interpretation of 1:20,000 aerial photographs. It was possible to prepare tentative vegetational maps. This was accomplished by several field checks. The final maps that were prepared have a simplified legend consisting of some structural features, physiognomy and terrain characteristics. These vegetational maps can be used for preliminary studies which are concerned with the conservation of the coastal belt.