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## Diversity and Dynamics of Plant Communities in Niger River Valley (W Regional Park)

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### 1. Introduction

The “W” Regional Park covers an area adjacent to the border of Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger (Fig. 1). The park hosts diverse flora and fauna. The large part of plant communities of this area remain poorly understood and only few reports on this subject are available (Garba, 1985; Boudouresque, 1995 and Couteron et al. 1992).

The objective of this work was to characterize plant communities along the Niger River bank during the flooding period and the dry season. These two periods play important roles in the ecosystem dynamics.

### 2. Materials and methods

The “W” Regional Park is located in the West African north-sudanian zone (Fig. 1; White, 1983) and covers an area of 1.024.280 ha. The average annual rainfall is  $704.7 \pm 180$  mm with an average temperature of  $37^\circ \text{C}$  (Fig. 2). This park includes several Precambrian geological structures. In the river valley, the soil is of clayey gley/pseudo-gley type. The banks of this river host a “special vegetation” called “bourgou” by the local population in reference to “bourgoutiere” commonly used in the literature for this type of vegetation (Dulieu, 1989). The phytosociological investigation was conducted in several sites located in this area from 2002 to 2003 during the flooding period and the dry season. Each releve included the complete list of species with their abundance-dominance coefficients (Braun Blanquet, 1932).

Data analysis was performed with Canoco software (ter Braak and Smilauer, 1998). For the different plant communities that were studied, the specific diversity indices of Shannon and Weaver (1949 in Legendre and Legendre, 1998) and Pielou equitability index were calculated.

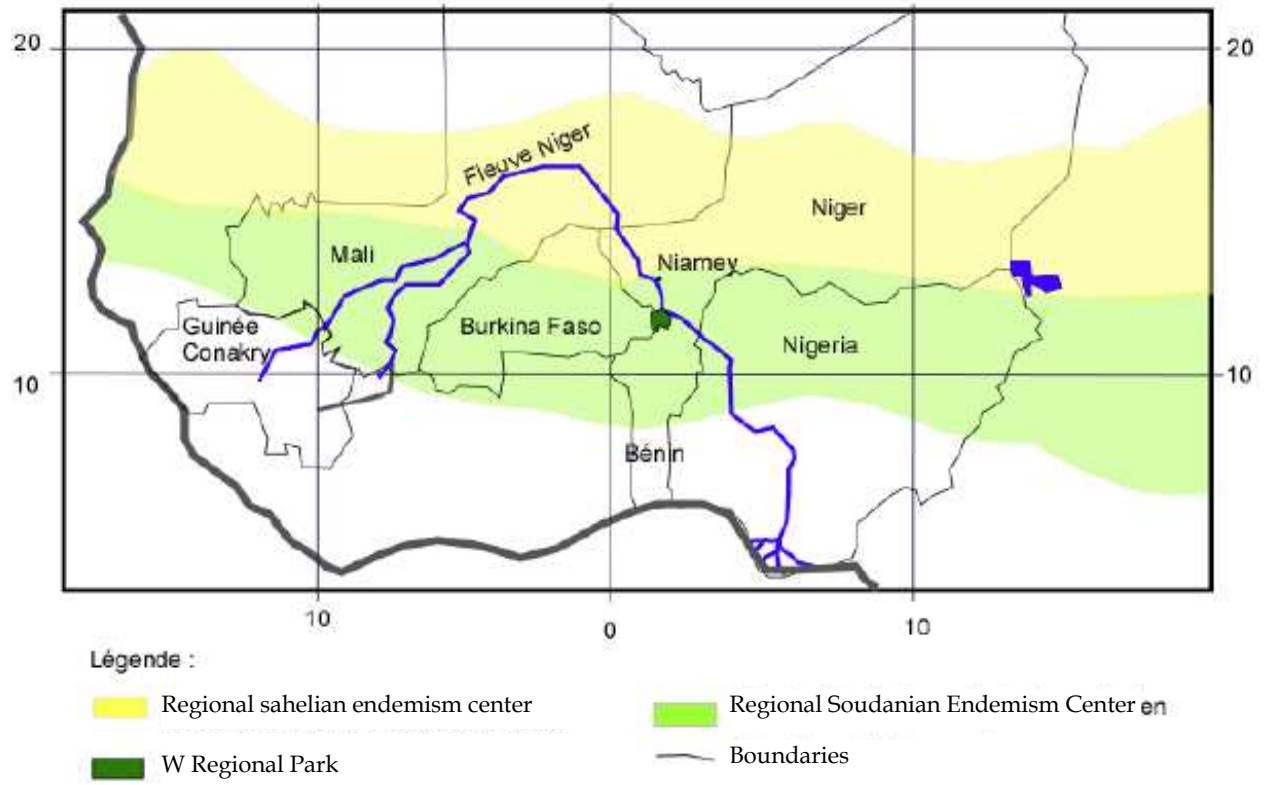


Fig. 1. "W" national park in West Africa

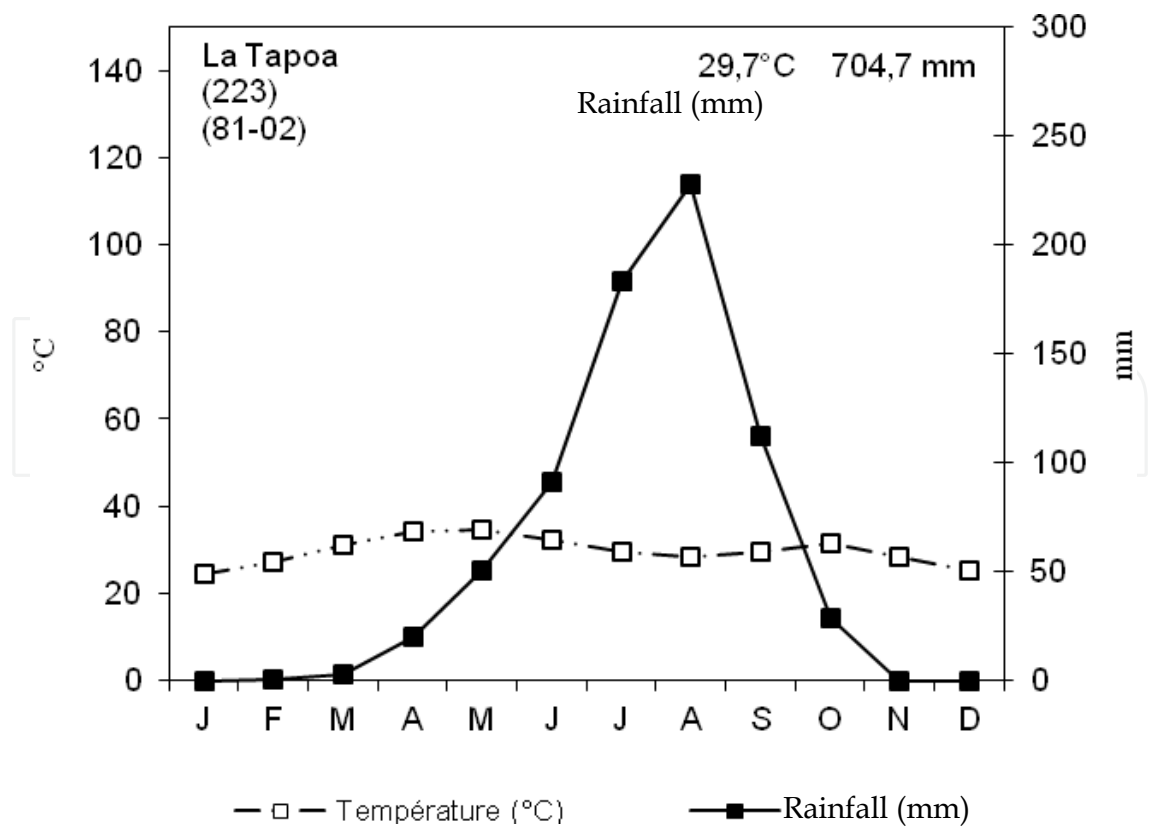


Fig. 2. Ombrothermic curve of Tapoa station (Niger)

The nomenclature after identification of species is referred to in Lebrun and Storck (1991-1997). The reported species were represented by *herbarium specimens* available in the herbaria of the UAM and ULB (BRLU).

### 3. Results

Detrended Correspondance Analysis was performed on a matrix of 42 relevés and 116 species. The first Axis reflected a gradient of water depth (Fig. 3). Near the origin of this axis were located the groups of plants adapted to deep water conditions occurring during flooding period while the dry season plant groups were positioned on its positive side.

The syntaxons described were:

- *Polygono senegalensis Echinochloetum colonae* ass. nova,
- *Eichhornietum crassipedis* Vanderlyst 1931,
- *Leptochloo coerulescentis Stachytarphetetum angustifoliae* ass. nova,
- *Cyperetum maculati* Mandango 1982.

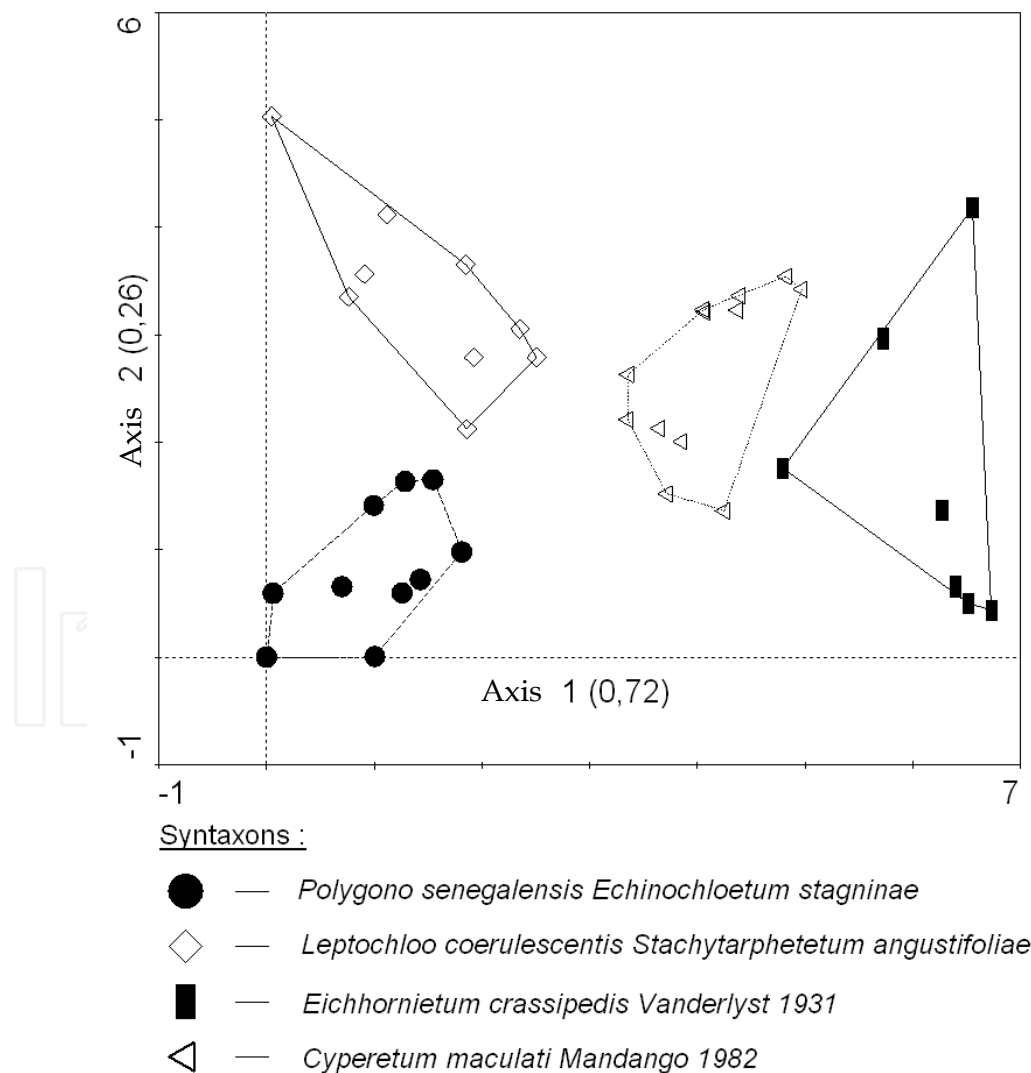


Fig. 3. Plant communities' classification in the banks of Niger River valley

**3.1 *Polygono senegalensis Echinochloetum stagninae* ass. nova**

*Polygono Echinochloetum stagninae* was defined by 13 releves and 22 species of which four were specific to this association: *Echinochloa stagnina*, *Polygonum senegalensis*, *Lemnapaucicostata* and *Azolla pinnata* (Table 1). Water depth may exceed 2 m. The pH was neutral and close to 7. The distribution of the biological types showed the predominance of therophytes (33.3%) followed by hydrophytes (28.6%) and phanerophytes (28.6%). Regarding the phytogeographical units, results showed the dominance of species with paleotropical distribution (33.33%) followed by pantropical species (28.57% and Sudan-Zambeian species (23.81%). The number of species per releve varied from 2 to 17 with an average of  $4.19 \pm 1.86$ . The Shannon diversity index was 2.69 and the maximum diversity index up to 4.64 while the Pielou equitability was 0.57.

	A													B										AL	CP		
N°	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	AL	CP		
N° Author	577	474	562	563	565	566	567	390	392	26	27	28	29	479	557	476	558	30	31	571	439	576	551				
Surface (m²)	10	15	15	20	20	20	10	10	15	15	15	10	10	10	20	10	10	15	10	10	10	10	10				
Land cover (%)	15	24	78	42	7	77	68	86	44	53	9	77	74	30	10	63	59	57	54	36	30	47	23	AL	CP		
<b><i>Polygono Echinochloetum stagninae</i> ass. nova.</b>																											
Polygonum senegalense	-	-	3	1	+	+	2	2	+	3	+	4	-	14,3	III	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	1,2	III
Echinochloa stagnina	+	+	3	3	1	4	3	4	3	2	+	+	4	29,3	V	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	1,5	I
Azolla pinnata	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	0,2	I	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
<i>Lemna paucicostata</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	0,2	I	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Oryza sativa L.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	0,2	I	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
<b><i>Eichhornietum crassipedis</i> Vanderlyst 1931</b>																											
Eichhornia crassipes (Mart.) Solms Laub.	+	2	+	+	+	+	2	+	-	-	-	-	-	3,7	III	+	+	3	+	1	2	2	+	+	2	9,9	V
Oryza longistaminata	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	0,2	I	-	-	-	-	3	-	2	+	-	-	5,6	II
Cyperus dilatatus Schum. & Thonn.	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,2	I	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,2	III
Ceratopteris cornuta	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,9	II
Saciolepis africana	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	0,6	II
Echinochloa crus - pavonis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	0,6	II
Ludwigia adscendens	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	0,2	I	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	0,3	I
Saciolepis ciliocincta	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,2	I	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	0,3	I
Echinochloa obtusifolia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,5	I
Nymphaea lotus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1,5	I

	A										B																					
<b>Other species</b>																																
Pterocarpus santalinoides DC.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,3	I
Acacia ataxacantha	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,8	I
Albizia zygia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,3	I
Sesbania sesban	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,2	I
Mitragyna inermis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,3	I
Dichrostachys cinerea	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,3	I
Ipomomea rubens	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,2	I
Mimosa pigra	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,2	I
Paspalum scrobicularum	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,3	I
Phaseolus lunatus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,6	II
Luffa cylindrica	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,3	I
Vetiveria nigritana	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,3	I
Phyllanthus reticulatus	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,2	I
Taccazea apiculata	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,3	I
Cynodon dactylon (L.) Pers.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,4	II
Merremia hederacea	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,6	II
Ipomoea blepharophylla	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,3	I
Dorstenia sp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,3	I
Cerathophyllum demersum	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,3	I
Utricularia stellaris L.f.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,2	I
Ipomoea aquatica	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,3	I

ALC: Average Land Cover, PC: Presence Coefficient

Table 1. *Polygono Echinochloetum stagninae* ass. nov. & *Eichhornietum crassipedis*.

**3.2 *Eichhornietum crassipedis* Vanderlyst 1931**

*Eichhornietum crassipedis* Vanderlyst 1931 was distributed along the linear fringe of the Niger River bank. Water depth was quite similar as for *Polygono senegalensis Echinochloetum stagninae*, since they colonized the same stations.

The distribution of biological types revealed the predominance of hydrophytes (40%), followed by therophytes (20%) and microphanerophytes (20%). The helophytes represented only 10%. Regarding the phytogeographical distribution results showed the dominance of cosmopolitan species. The *Eichhornietum crassipedis* association consisted of 10 releves and 17 species. The average number of species per releve was 4. The Shannon diversity index was 2.34 and Pielou equitability 0.57. These values indicated a very small number of dominant species within the plant community.

### 3.3 *Leptochloo Stachytarphetetum angustifoliae* ass. nova association

*Leptochloo coerulescentis Stachytarphetetum angustifoliae* developed in the late dry season and beginning of the rainy season on the banks of the river that were sufficiently dewatered to allow the development of an herbaceous layer. It corresponded to a more or less continuous linear strip along the banks that were battered by the waves.

This syntaxon was defined by 10 releves and 34 species of those three were specific to the association: *Stachytarpheta angustifolia*, *Leptochloa coerulescens*, *Cardiospermum halicacabum* (Table 2). The raw distribution of biological types showed that helophytes were dominant (58% -73%), followed by therophytes (25%) and hydrophytes (22%) in the pondered distribution. Species of Sudanian distribution represented only 8% of the spectrum. As for the weighted spectrum, it was largely dominated by the species of Sudanese-Zambezian distribution (59.4%), species of Sudanian (9%) and Afrotropical species distribution (8.79%). The number of species per survey varied from 3 to 13 with an average of  $7.6 \pm 3.2$ . The Shannon diversity index was 3.6 and the maximum diversity index 4.9. The equitability index of Pielou was 0.74. These results suggest an equal distribution and overlap between species.

### 3.4 *Cyperetum maculati* Mandago 1982 association

*Cyperetum maculati* grows in the dry season on the sandbanks of the river's main channel. *Cyperus maculatus* form clumps of variable size. It is a rhizomatous species which is completely submerged during flooding periods. During this period of prolonged immersion, the plants were represented by perennial rhizomes. The floristic association has many annuals germinating on wet sand (Table 2). The association was defined by 10 releves and 39 species of which seven were specific to this association: *Cyperus maculatus*, *Cleome viscosa*, *Glinus lotoides*, *Glinus oppositifolius*, *Cassia occidentalis*, *Trianthema portulacastrum* and *Bergia suffruticosa*.

*Cyperetum maculati* Mandago 1982 was represented by open herbaceous vegetation in dense clumps. The biological types distribution was dominated by therophytes and hydrophytes respectively 43.8% and 28.1%. The weighted distribution was represented by therophytes and phanerophytes with respectively 37.8% and 36.3% followed by hydrophytes (24.8%). The raw phytogeographical units distribution was dominated by paleotropical species (30.3%), followed by species of Sudanese-Zambezian distribution (27.27%) and pantropical species (24.24%). Other types showed low phytogeographic values. For this group, the number of species per survey varied from 5 to 18 with an average of  $7.3 \pm 4.42$ . The Shannon diversity index was 3.14 with a maximum diversity index of 5.24. Pielou equitability index value was 0.64. These results support the conclusion that recovery is evenly distributed between species.



	C										D												
N°	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42				
N° auteurs	306	307	308	312	274	275	345	346	337	342	343	344	329	332	333	318	328	340	322				
Area (m²)	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10				
Land cover (%)	27	89	56	41	100	77	65	24	83	25	100	27	100	100	100	100	19	59,5	42	A L C	C P		
<b><i>Cyperetum maculati</i> Mandango 1982</b>																							
Cyperus maculatus Böck.	-	+	+	3	4	3	-	-	-	+	15	IV	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	0,3	I		
Glinus lotoides L.	+	+	-	-	+	-	+	+	-	1	2	IV	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	1,8	II	
Mollugo nudicaulis	+	4	3	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	III	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Glinus oppositifolius (L.) A. DC.	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	+	1	III	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	0,3	I		
Cleome viscosa L.	2	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	II	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Trianthema portulacastrum (L.) L.	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	1	II	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Bergia suffruticosa (Del.) Fenzl.	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	1	II	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Cassia occidentalis L.	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	4	-	7	II	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Heliotropium indicum L.	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	+	1	II	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	0,7	II		
<b><i>Leptochloa Stachytarphetetum angustifoliae</i> ass. nova</b>																							
Stachytarpheta angustifolia Mold.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			3	+	3	3	3	2	-	1	-	19	IV
Leptochloa coerulescens Steud.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	1	II	-	-	3	3	3	+	-	3	-	17	III
Albizia zygia (DC.) J. F. Mocer.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			+	2	-	-	+	2	-	-	-	4	III
Cardiospermum halicacabum L.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	2	-	3	-	-	-	5,8	II
Coldenia procumbens L.	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-		I	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,2	I
Hyparrhenia involucreta Stapf. var involucreta	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	0,3	I
Eragrostis atrovirens (Desf.) Steud.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	0,3	I





### 3.5 Synsystematique

<i>class</i>	<b>Order</b>	<b>Alliance</b>	<b>Associations</b>
<b>Phragmitetea</b> Tüxen & Preising 1942,	<i>Papyretalia</i> Lebrun 1947	<i>Echinochloion crusicarponis</i> Léonard 1950	<i>Leptochloa-Stachytarpheta angustifoliae</i> ass. nov.
		<i>Jussieuion</i> Léonard 1950	<i>Polygonum senegalense</i> <i>Echinochloetum stagninea</i> ass. nov.
<b>Potametea pectinati</b> Tüxen & Preising 1942	<i>Nymphaeetalia loti</i> Lebrun 1947	<i>Nymphaeion micranthae</i> E. Boud. 1995	<i>Eichhornietum crassipedis</i> Vanderlyst 1931
<b>Ruderali-manihotetea</b> (Léonard in Taton 1949) Schmitz 1988	<i>Amarantho-Ecliptetalia</i> Schmitz 1971	<i>Ecliption albae</i> Lebrun 1947	<i>Cyperetum maculati</i> Mandango 1982

## 4. Discussion

The initial phase of the bourgoutiere included *Leptochloa coerulescens*, *Echinochloa stagnina*, *Echinochloa pyramidalis*, *Cyperus cylindrostachyus*, *Saciolepis africana* and *Stachytarpheta angustifolia*. These plant species were progressively established in the late dry season and early rainy season. *Leptochloa coerulescens* bear fruits during this period. This phase corresponded to the ecological amplitude of *Leptochloa-Stachytarpheta angustifoliae*. With the increase in water level, *Polygonum senegalense* and *Echinochloa stagnina* actively developed by vegetative propagation.

The optimal phase or aquatic prairie of bourgoutiere corresponded to *Polygonum Echinochloetum stagninae*. The group covered a broad variable on the shores of the river. During the dry season, *Echinochloa stagnina* as *Polygonum senegalense* fall on the dewatered river banks. At that time, both species have spread their seeds. In the riverbed, *Cyperetum maculata* Mandango 1982 was subject to strong variations in relation to alternating periods of flood and dry period. During the dry period characterized with a low water flow in the river, the species happened to complete its cycle. The start of this cycle, as and when the water recedes, is characterized by buds on the stolons. The flooding period was characterized by a progressive invasion by water hyacinth and resulted in the formation of *Eichhornietum crassipedis*. This determined syntaxon pollution of aquatic stressed environments (Brendonck et al. (2003)).

These stations were characterized by variability of plant communities determined by the river water regime (Duvigneaud, 1946). Indeed, this group was not identified by Atta and Danjimo (2003) in the same river valley during the dry season. Gradually, as the water level dropped, hydrophytes population declined and progressively replaced by therophytes. This resulted in a decrease of the number of species.

## 5. Conclusion

Bougoutières vegetation plays an important role in the ecosystem of the W regional park. Apart from *Eichhornietum crassipedis*, the different syntaxons provide forage and habitat for wildlife. These syntaxons were characterized by low diversity indices in relation to dominance effects between species and disturbance (fire bank, harvested biomass) related to human activities.

## 6. Acknowledgments

The authors thank the Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Fish the Parc du W du Niger. They also thank for facilitating access to the Free University of Brussels, the University of Niamey, the Project ECOPAS and the African Academy for Science for their permanent support during the different phases of this work. They also thank Mr L. Pauwels the Botanical Garden of Meise, Prof. B. Sinsin Abomey Calavi University of Benin and Prof. van der Maesen of the National Herbarium of Wageningen who have made valuable contributions in the identification of species.

## 7. List of species

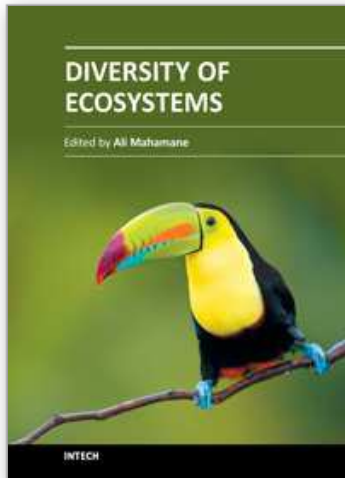
Species	Family
<i>Abrus precatorius</i> L.	Fabaceae
<i>Acacia ataxacantha</i> DC.	Mimosaceae
<i>Albizia zygia</i> (DC.) J.F. Macbr.	Mimosaceae
<i>Azolla pinnata</i> R. Brown var <i>pinnata</i>	Azollaceae
<i>Bergia suffruticosa</i> (Del.) Fenzl	Elatinaceae
<i>Caperonia fistulosa</i> Beille	Euphorbiaceae
<i>Cardiospermum halicacabum</i> L.	Sapindaceae
<i>Cassia occidentalis</i> L.	Caesalpiniaceae
<i>Celtis toka</i> (Forssk.) Hepper & Wood	Ulmaceae
<i>Ceratophyllum demersum</i> L.	Ceratophyllaceae
<i>Ceratopteris cornuta</i>	Adiantaceae
<i>Cleome viscosa</i> L.	Capparaceae
<i>Cola laurifolia</i> Mast.	Sterculiaceae
<i>Coldenia procumbens</i> L.	Boraginaceae
<i>Commelina benghalensis</i> L.	Commelinaceae
<i>Corchorus tridens</i> L.	Tiliaceae
<i>Cynodon dactylon</i> (L.) Pers.	Poaceae
<i>Cyperus dilatatus</i> Schum. & Thonn.	Cyperaceae
<i>Cyperus maculatus</i> Boeck.	Cyperaceae

<i>Dactyloctenium aegyptium</i> (L.) P. Beauv.	Poaceae
<i>Dichrostachys cinerea</i> (L.) Wight & Arn.	Mimosaceae
<i>Diospyros mespiliformis</i> Hochst. ex A. DC.	Ebenaceae
<i>Eichhornia crassipes</i> (Mart.) Solms	
<i>Echinochloa crus-pavonis</i> (Kunth) Schult.	Poaceae
<i>Echinochloa obtusiflora</i> Stapf	Poaceae
<i>Echinochloa stagnina</i> (Retz.) P. Beauv.	Poaceae
<i>Eichhornia natans</i> (P. Beauv.) Solms-Laub.	Pontederiaceae
<i>Eleusine indica</i> (L.) Gaertn.	Poaceae
<i>Eragrostis atrovirens</i> (Desf.) Trin. ex Steud.	Poaceae
<i>Eragrostis tremula</i> Hochst. ex Steud.	Poaceae
<i>Flueggea virosa</i> (Roxb. ex Willd.) Voigt	Euphorbiaceae
<i>Glinus lotoides</i> L.	Aizoaceae
<i>Glinus oppositifolius</i> (L.) DC.	Aizoaceae
<i>Heliotropium indicum</i> L.	Boraginaceae
<i>Hyparrhenia involucreta</i> Stapf	Poaceae
<i>Hyptis spicigera</i> Lam.	Lamiaceae
<i>Indigofera hirsuta</i> L.	Fabaceae
<i>Ipomoea aquatica</i> Forssk.	Convolvulaceae
<i>Ipomoea blepharophylla</i> Hall. f.	Convolvulaceae
<i>Ipomoea rubens</i> Choisy	Convolvulaceae
<i>Lemna paucicostata</i> Hegelm. ex Engelm.	Lemnaceae
<i>Leptochloa caerulescens</i> Steud.	Poaceae
<i>Cleome viscosa</i> L.	Capparaceae
<i>Ludwigia octovalvis</i> (Jacq.) Raven	Onagraceae
<i>Luffa cylindrica</i> (L.) M.J. Roem.	Cucurbitaceae
<i>Merremia hederacea</i> (Burm. f.) Hallier f.	Convolvulaceae
<i>Mimosa pigra</i> L.	Mimosaceae
<i>Mitragyna inermis</i> (Willd.) O. Ktze.	Rubiaceae
<i>Mollugo nudicaulis</i> Lam.	Molluginaceae
<i>Morelia senegalensis</i> A. Rich. ex DC.	Rubiaceae
<i>Nymphaea lotus</i> L.	Nymphaeaceae
<i>Oryza longistaminata</i> A. Chev. & Roehr.	Poaceae
<i>Oryza sativa</i> L.	Poaceae
<i>Paspalum scrobiculatum</i> L.	Poaceae
<i>Phaseolus lunatus</i> L.	Fabaceae
<i>Phyllanthus reticulatus</i> Poir.	Euphorbiaceae
<i>Polygonum senegalense</i> Meisn.	Polygonaceae
<i>Pterocarpus santalinoides</i> DC.	Fabaceae
<i>Sacciolepis africana</i> C.E. Hubbard & Snowden	Poaceae
<i>Sacciolepis ciliocincta</i> (Pilger.) Stapf.	Poaceae
<i>Sesbania leptocarpa</i> DC.	Fabaceae
<i>Sesbania sesban</i> (L.) Merr.	Fabaceae

<i>Stachytarpheta angustifolia</i> (Mill.) Vahl	Verbenaceae
<i>Tacazzea apiculata</i> Oliv.	Asclepiadaceae
<i>Tamarindus indica</i> L.	Caesalpiniaceae
<i>Trianthema portulacastrum</i> L.	Aizoaceae
<i>Utricularia stellaris</i> L.f.	Lentibulariaceae
<i>Vetiveria nigritana</i> (Benth.) Stapf	Poaceae

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## **Diversity of Ecosystems**

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The ecosystems present a great diversity worldwide and use various functionalities according to ecologic regions. In this new context of variability and climatic changes, these ecosystems undergo notable modifications amplified by domestic uses of which it was subjected to. Indeed the ecosystems render diverse services to humanity from their composition and structure but the tolerable levels are unknown. The preservation of these ecosystemic services needs a clear understanding of their complexity. The role of research is not only to characterise the ecosystems but also to clearly define the tolerable usage levels. Their characterisation proves to be important not only for the local populations that use it but also for the conservation of biodiversity. Hence, the measurement, management and protection of ecosystems need innovative and diverse methods. For all these reasons, the aim of this book is to bring out a general view on the function of ecosystems, modelling, sampling strategies, invading species, the response of organisms to modifications, the carbon dynamics, the mathematical models and theories that can be applied in diverse conditions.

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