



Paper: “Territorializing Aquatic Biodiversity: Local Ecological Knowledge (LEK) and Elasmobranch Distribution in the Kango Estuary (Gabon)”

Submitted: 27 October 2025

Accepted: 28 November 2025

Published: 31 December 2025

Corresponding Author: Judicael Regis Kema Kema

Doi: 10.19044/esj.2025.v21n35p123

Peer review:

Reviewer 1: Justine Rutto
Kenya Marine Fisheries Research Institute

Reviewer 2: Blinded

Reviewer A:

Recommendation: Revisions Required

The TITLE is clear and it is adequate to the content of the article.

Yes, it captured the content of the manuscript

The ABSTRACT clearly presents objects, methods, and results.

The component that requires major revision is the results, the results of this study are largely missing in quantitative terms

There are a few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.

Although the use of language is fairly adequate, areas of improvement have been identified in the manuscript

The study METHODS are explained clearly.

This section requires a major revision, a whole lot of parameters reported in the Results were not mentioned in the methodology let alone being described. No information was given on spatial distribution (sampling locations) and evaluation of water quality parameters (notably temperature and salinity) in the methodology

The body of the paper is clear and does not contain errors.

The 'Result' requires major revision too, it can be greatly improved with tables of results and the report of the most salient information. The authors made the manuscript boring with so much unnecessary information, watering of the important information with repetition of results. A particular figure was not even visible for validation of the report made based on the figure.

The 'Discussion' is too word and reduces the quality of the submissions.

The CONCLUSION or summary is accurate and supported by the content.

Fairly adequate but also too wordy which make it not so concise based on the objectives of the study

The list of REFERENCES is comprehensive and appropriate.

Adequate but can be improved by use of more recent references

Please rate the TITLE of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

Please rate the ABSTRACT of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

3

Please rate the LANGUAGE of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

Please rate the METHODS of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

2

Please rate the BODY of this paper.

[Poor] **1-5** [Excellent]

2

Please rate the CONCLUSION of this paper.

[Poor] **1-5** [Excellent]

3

Please rate the REFERENCES of this paper.

[Poor] **1-5** [Excellent]

3

Overall Recommendation!!!

Return for major revision and resubmission

Comments and Suggestions to the Author(s):

The methodology, results and discussion are major areas which need to be greatly improved.

Reviewer B:

Recommendation: Revisions Required

The TITLE is clear and it is adequate to the content of the article.

The title is concise, relevant, and accurately reflects the scope of the study, which links aquatic biodiversity, local ecological knowledge, and spatial distribution of elasmobranchs in Gabon's Komo Estuary. It captures both ecological and socio-geographical dimensions effectively.

The ABSTRACT clearly presents objects, methods, and results.

The abstract presents the objectives, methodology, and results clearly. It succinctly summarizes the integration of LEK, participatory mapping, and GIS analysis. A slight improvement would be to specify quantitative findings (e.g., species richness range or key test results) to enhance precision.

There are a few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.

The manuscript is generally well-written, coherent, and professional. Minor grammatical inconsistencies (e.g., article use and punctuation) appear in a few sections. A light language edit would further polish the text.

The study METHODS are explained clearly.

The methodology is sound and appropriate for the research questions. The combination of semi-structured interviews, participatory mapping, and spatial statistics (KDE, Moran's I, Getis-Ord Gi*) demonstrates a robust mixed-method approach. However, the authors should clarify:

How LEK data were validated or cross-checked.

The rationale for dichotomizing the seasons into only “dry” and “wet.”

The criteria for interpreting the non-significant spatial clustering (G_i^* , Moran's I).

The body of the paper is clear and does not contain errors.

The paper is well-organized, with a logical flow from introduction to discussion. Figures and tables are clear and informative. The results section is detailed, though some figures (e.g., environmental gradient maps) could be consolidated or simplified for clarity.

The CONCLUSION or summary is accurate and supported by the content.

The conclusions are well-supported by the data and successfully integrate ecological and social insights. The recommendation for incorporating LEK into conservation planning and estuarine co-management is timely and relevant.

The list of REFERENCES is comprehensive and appropriate.

The reference list is comprehensive, up-to-date, and relevant. The authors use a good mix of recent and foundational works. Ensure all in-text citations (e.g., Barletta et al., 2010) match the reference list exactly, and maintain consistent citation formatting.

Please rate the TITLE of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

5

Please rate the ABSTRACT of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

Please rate the LANGUAGE of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

Please rate the METHODS of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

Please rate the BODY of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

Please rate the CONCLUSION of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

5

Please rate the REFERENCES of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

5

Overall Recommendation!!!

Accepted, minor revision needed

Comments and Suggestions to the Author(s):

Dear Authors,

Your manuscript presents a rich and interdisciplinary perspective on the spatial ecology of elasmobranchs in the Komo Estuary through the lens of local ecological knowledge. It contributes both theoretically and empirically to biogeography and environmental geography. The participatory mapping and spatial statistical analyses are methodologically strong and well-presented.

The discussion is insightful, particularly where you connect fisher territorialities with ecological spatial patterns. The conclusions appropriately highlight applied implications for conservation and co-management.

Minor edits to the text's grammar, figure structure, and methodological clarity would make this work even stronger. Congratulations on a solid and original study.

Kind regards,
Justine Rutto
