

# Publications

**Community Forest Monitoring for the Carbon Market: Opportunities Under REDD**, edited by Margaret Skutsch (2011), xix + 188 pp., Earthscan, London, UK. ISBN 9781849711364 (hbk), GBP 60.00.

The last few years have seen an escalation of interest in the concept of reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD), and potential co-benefits such as forest enhancement and biodiversity conservation (REDD+). Human use of forests is believed to contribute c. 12% of total anthropogenic carbon emissions (van der Werf et al., 2009, *Nature Geoscience*, 2, 737–738), and REDD+ is expected to play a major role in any post-2012 agreement of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It is generally anticipated that an international REDD+ framework will see carbon accounting and payments taking place at the national level but around the world very large areas of forest are managed by local people under some form of community forest management. There remain many unanswered questions about how these people might contribute to REDD+ and how it might affect them. This important book, edited by Margaret Skutsch and with chapters from a range of expert authors, contributes to this debate by examining the potential role of local communities in the monitoring of forest carbon.

The book is an edited volume in two parts. The first covers Principles and Issues, and the second a set of case studies. All the material in the book is drawn from a major empirical study called the Kyoto: Think Global, Act Local (K:TGAL) programme, funded by The Netherlands Development Corporation. This 6-year programme conducted research at 30 study sites and nine control sites in seven countries. In each case local communities were trained with a standard methodology to monitor changes in carbon stocks in their forests. The sites selected were mostly in dry forests of a relatively low value from a timber perspective, where opportunity costs (for example from agriculture) were low and degradation a greater problem than deforestation.

The chapters in the first section of the book carefully explain the potential of community forest monitoring, the carbon emissions it can save, the value of local participation in monitoring, the broader policy context for REDD+, information required for national REDD+ programmes, and the costs and reliability of community carbon monitoring. It concludes with more technical chapters on the field methods used and the

potential of free software for use in the field. These chapters provide a very clear and compelling case for community monitoring of forest carbon. Importantly, the authors are careful to avoid overstating the case, emphasizing repeatedly that carbon payments and local monitoring can be beneficial under particular circumstances but are unlikely to cover opportunity costs in high-value forest. The second part of the book presents a series of more detailed case studies at each of the K:TGAL sites, which include Nepal, India, Tanzania, Papua New Guinea and several West African countries.

The book draws on its strong empirical foundations to deliver some important insights for REDD+. It demonstrates convincingly that local people are capable of collecting high-quality monitoring data that are not significantly different from data collected by professional experts, and at a much lower cost; that carbon payments at the local level of around USD 5 per tonne can result in improved returns for local people from community forest management, provided that they are still allowed to collect high-value forest products such as firewood; and that locally collected data are better than remote sensing data at picking up relatively small changes in carbon stocks in degraded forest. The book makes a series of recommendations for the design of REDD+. These include (1) crediting only measured increases in forest carbon under community forest management, because measuring avoided deforestation and degradation in degraded forests is technically too challenging to be worth doing given the relatively low baseline rates of loss, and (2) paying communities that are compliant with management plans for the act of monitoring carbon stocks, rather than for carbon produced. This would avoid equity issues arising from different growth rates of different forests and reduce incentives for cheating.

The book takes a generally optimistic view of REDD+ and could give more attention to concerns such as the lack of political incentives for powerful bodies to cede control over management and monitoring to local communities, and the challenge of convincing the UNFCCC to accept locally collected data. Nonetheless, it provides an important and timely injection of robust empirical data to the REDD+ debate and makes a convincing case for involving local community groups in the monitoring of carbon in degraded forests.

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**A Thousand Years of Whaling: A Faroese Common Property Regime** by Seán Kerins (2011), iv + 191 pp., CCI Press, Edmonton, Canada. ISBN 9781896445526 (pbk), CAN 40.00.

Whaling has been a hot conservation topic for decades, reaching far outside scientific circles to prompt parliamentary debates and become the focus of Oscar-nominated documentaries. Initially it was concern for the precipitous decline of whale stocks and the ability of the International Whaling Commission to manage them that resulted in the infamous moratorium on commercial whaling in 1986. In the decades that followed the science improved and whale stocks began to recover, yet the ban on commercial whaling remained as issues of sustainability became overshadowed by arguments over animal welfare and necessity.

Indeed public and political opinion over whaling activities is now passionately divided. In one corner there are those who believe the sustainable hunting of whales is a legitimate form of fishing and in many cases fundamental to the cultural identity of coastal communities. In the other there are those who regard whaling as a barbarous activity, unnecessary in a modern world.

Since the 1980s the traditional hunting of pilot whales in the Faroe Islands—the *grindadráp*—has been a campaign focus for international animal rights and environmental organizations. Opposition has been fierce, with the anti-whaling movement condemning the way whales are slaughtered, the sustainability of the hunt and its management, and the cultural and economic justification for what they consider a gruesome tradition.

This book explores the arguments made by the anti-whaling organizations in opposition to pilot whaling, balancing their claims against the reality of the modern *grindadráp*. However, in doing this Kerins' goal is not to support or denounce either side of the argument but simply to allow readers to consider the *grindadráp* in its proper historical, economic and cultural context.

The book begins with an overview of whaling and the philosophy of anti-whaling protests. Whilst there are entire books devoted to these subjects, this chapter, written from a social science perspective, offers up