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ABSTRACT

The Nyungwe forest, which covers part of the south and west provinces, is surrounded by communities from four districts; ie Nyamagabe district in the east, Nyamaseke district in the north and north-west, Rusizi district in west and south west and Nyaruguru district in the south. Households in communities adjacent to Nyungwe forest national park utilize a variety of resources from the forest. This study assessed the contribution of resources from Nyungwe Forest national park to the socio-economic well-being of fringe communities. Data was collected from 120 households that neighbor the park. Household surveys, interviews and focused group discussions were among the methods used to collect the data. Findings of this study indicate that households adjacent to Nyungwe forest national park utilized a variety of resources from the park. These included medicines, fuel wood, building materials and handcraft materials. The frequency of harvest of these resources was influenced by household socio-economic endowments such as landholding and livestock holding. There were services that local people benefited from because of their proximity to the forest. These included tourism, enterprise development, co-operatives and employment. These were found to contribute significantly to the social-well-being of the people. Resources from Nyungwe forest national park have greatly contributed to the socio-economic well-being of fringe communities and therefore these communities should be involved in the management of the park so that they feel its ownership.