

VIDEO

# Mangroves and Prawn Raising: Violated Green

## A Documentary about Brazilian Coast

“... that’s why we want the protection of our mangrove, because if we don’t have our mangrove, we won’t have the river, we won’t have fish, we won’t have our food, we won’t have our survival.” Luis Caboclo, Tremembé



This video is reviewed by **Natália Tavares de Azevedo** (nataliatavares@ufpr.br), a sociology student working for a doctorate in environment and development at the Federal University of Paraná, and **Náina Pierri** (naina@cem.ufpr.br), a sociologist and professor at the Federal University of Paraná, Brazil

The documentary “Mangroves and Prawn Raising: Violated Green,” shows the impact of extensive prawn farming on the communities of the coast of Ceará state in Brazil. Produced for the Second General Assembly of the Redmanglar International in 2004 by the Forum in Defence of the Coastal Zone of Ceará and the Environment and Justice Foundation, the documentary brings together many testimonials from community and institutional leaders.

The state of Ceará is located in northeastern Brazil and has a ragged coastline with well-preserved dunes and mangroves of great scenic beauty. The indigenous and fishing communities living here rely on local knowledge to sustain their traditional livelihoods which include artisanal fisheries using boats, collecting molluscs from the mangrove forests, handicrafts, as well as subsistence farming.

The documentary shows how the watersheds of the Jaguaribe River on the east coast and of the Acaraú River on the west coast are being degraded by prawn farming. Based on accounts from residents of the communities of Curral Velho, Itarema and Cumbe Icapuí, the film shows how the business logic of productivity is triggering widespread environmental, socioeconomic and cultural

damage. Large areas of mangroves have been destroyed, in violation of national environmental regulations, leading to decline in fish and other species upon which the coastal population depends. Other impacts include the contamination of mangroves by untreated effluents from the prawn farms, and the disruption of the traditional livelihood base due to the degradation of mangroves and soil salinization in adjacent areas. The film reveals that most of the prawn farms have been established illegally, without environmental licenses, and have led to major conflicts, even violence.

The privatization of public lands and the support of the government to groups wielding the power of big money demonstrate the state’s connivance with a model of development which is making the survival of the traditional fisherfolk of Ceará’s coast, unviable. The words of the shaman of Tremembé, Luis Caboclo, in the closing statement in the film, summarizes the mood of the coastal communities of Ceará: “We don’t want prawn cultivation here inside our area or on the upstream of the rivers. If the Court does not act on it and stop it, we will!”. ❏



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Writers and potential contributors to YEMAYA, please note that write-ups should be brief, about 500 words. They could deal with issues that are of direct relevance to women and men of fishing communities. They could also focus on recent research or on meetings and workshops that have raised gender issues in fisheries. Also welcome are life stories of women and men of fishing communities working towards a sustainable

fishery or for a recognition of their work within the fishery. Please also include a one-line biographical note on the writer.

Please do send us comments and suggestions to make the newsletter more relevant. We look forward to hearing from you and to receiving regular write-ups for the newsletter.