

Kenya: A Natural Outlook: Chapter 13. Agricultural Expansion and Its Consequences in the Taita Hills, Kenya (Developments in Earth Surface Processes)

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The indigenous cloud forests in the Taita Hills have suffered substantial degradation for several centuries due to agricultural expansion. Additionally, climate change imposes an imminent threat for local economy and environmental sustainability. In such circumstances, elaborating tools to conciliate socioeconomic growth and natural resources conservation is an enormous challenge. This chapter describes applications of remote sensing and geographic information systems for assessing land-cover changes in the Taita Hills and its surrounding lowlands. Furthermore, it provides an overall assessment on the consequences of land-cover changes to water resources, biodiversity and livelihoods. The analyses presented in this study were undertaken at multiple spatial scales, using field data, airborne digital images and satellite imagery. Furthermore, a modelling framework was designed to delineate agricultural expansion projections and evaluate the future impacts of agriculture on soil erosion and irrigation water demand.



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