

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

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During the autumn of 2020 and summer 2021, as part of the project “Atlas of Wetlands from South-southeastern Mexico”, we visited wetland complexes inside or close to eight Ramsar sites from the State of Quintana Roo, Mexico. One site that is very special and poorly known is Yum Balam. The official name is “Área de Protección de Flora y Fauna Yum Balam” (flora and fauna protection area). It is a system comprising wetlands, both forested and herbaceous. The dominant tree species in the coastal area are mangroves: red mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*), black mangrove (*Avicennia germinans*), white mangrove (*Laguncularia racemosa*), and buttonwood (*Conocarpus erecta*). Freshwater areas are dominated by Paroutis or Everglades palm (*Acoelorrhaphe wrightii*), bloodwood tree (*Haematoxylon campechianum*; tintal), and pond apple (*Annona glabra*; corchal). The herbaceous wetlands are dominated by sawgrass (*Cladium jamaicense*), spikerush (*Eleocharis* sp.), cattail (*Typha* sp.) and grasses.

These wetlands are established in karst area under the influence of tectonic alterations. These are geomorphological landscapes caused by dissolution of rocks (limestone, dolomite, halite, gypsum) which facilitate the local and regional water movement together with dissolved substance, and share not only water, but the whole hydrological system of the catchment area. The quality and quantity of water, in combination with other factors, are crucial for maintaining the form, structure, and ecological character of wetlands. Shown below are some photos from our field investigations. (Note: All photos taken by the senior author.)



Flooded forested wetland dominated by pond apple (*Annona glabra*).



Palm grove dominated by Florida thatch palm (*Thrinax radiata*) and sawgrass (*Cladium jamaicense*).



Herbaceous wetland of sawgrass (*Cladium jamaicense*) with flooded forested wetland in the background.



Mangrove and herbaceous wetland bordering the Conil lagoon, Quintana Roo.



Palm swamp dominated by Paurotis or Everglades palm (*Accoelorrhaphe wrightii*).



Mangrove tree crab (*Aratus pisonii*).



White-collared or Cinnamon-rumped Seed eater (*Sporophila torqueola*).