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Senate body for protecting mangroves **By Our Staff Reporter**

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ISLAMABAD, Dec 29: The Senate Standing Committee on Environment has recommended to include the fast disappearing mangrove area of Sindh in the protected zone.

The mangrove forest area, which has decreased to 2,600sq/km from 26,000sq/km due to natural causes as well as human exploitation, were once the sixth largest mangrove forests out of the 92 countries in the world.

In a meeting here on Monday, the committee asked the stakeholders to declare the disappearing mangroves a marine park and assess the rate of its decrease every year so that preventive measures could be taken.

The meeting said that decrease in fresh water/flood water and reduction in silt deposit were damaging to mangroves.

Marine, agriculture, oil, industrial pollution along Korangi Creek were playing havoc with the mangroves.

Preservation of mangrove wood and by-products was non-existent as locals used them for timber, fuel wood, fishing poles, fodder, seafood, and grazing purposes.

The committee asked the Sindh Environment Protection Agency to prepare a report on the functionality of treatment plants and regulations being followed.

It was recommended that oil pollution entering mangrove be curtailed by adopting strict monitoring and disaster management policy.

The meeting recommended that environment impact assessment surveys would also be carried out on mangrove preservation on regular basis and published.

The Ministry of Environment and Forest Department would launch awareness campaign to engage local community to protect the fast disappearing mangroves.