

KEY ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS ASSOCIATED WITH SHIP BEACHING AND WRECKS ON THE NIGERIAN COASTLINE.

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The Nigerian coastline stretching about 853km is composed by low-lying sandy and muddy (Mahin Mud coast) shoreline. The shoreline is wave dominated with mostly plunging breakers which generate littoral drift mostly from west to east. The entire Nigerian coastline is highly susceptible to coastal erosion caused by both natural and anthropogenic activities. Some of the natural forces include wave and tidal climate, sediment characteristics, low-lying nature while anthropogenic forces include harbour construction activities, beach sand mining and other several human activities. Recently, abandon ships have been beaching along the shoreline. The ship wrecks act as perpendicular groins trapping littoral drift on the updrift side and causing large scale erosion on the downdrift side. Between the year 2010 and 2011, more than fifteen ships beached on the beach along the Lagos/Lekki barrier coastline. Along the Alpha beach especially, ship wrecks have caused massive erosion along the beach causing the devastation of the coastal road, beach tourism facilities, loss of power lines with concomitant flooding of the back beach. This human activity involving ship wrecks beaching on the beach is now aggravating the already erodible beach. Ship wrecks are either accidental or intentional. However, the effects of ship wrecks on the beach are detrimental to the stability of the beach and back beach and hence pragmatic solutions to continuous ship wrecks beaching along the coastline should be sought.