

Mozambique hit by loss of forests and swamps

The Pretoria News Africa Service

Maputo

MOZAMBIQUE has lost 57 per cent of its forests and 60 percent of its mangrove swamps in the past decade.

The official news agency Aim said destruction of mangrove swamps had seriously affected the country's prawn populations.

Prawns, one of Mozambique's main export earners, spend the early stages of their lives in mangrove swamps.

Biologist Mia Couto told a seminar on environmental protection that stretches along the Mozambican coast were some of the most fragile ecosystems in the

world and Mozambique was one of the 10 countries most threatened by coastal erosion.

Mr Couto warned that mistakes made in the irrigation system of the Limpopo Valley had led to salination, which in turn had caused large areas of formerly cultivated land to become barren.