



40-years of fires in a touristic area from South of Spain.

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Costa del Sol in the Province of Malaga is one of the major touristic region in Spain. Its develop started in the 1960s of the XXth century at the same time as other regions in Mediterranean Europe. Since then, this area has become a holiday touristic centre for different countries and regions from Europe (United Kingdom, Escandinavia, Germany, Netherlands, Russia, etc.). Likewise, Costa del Sol has been characterised by a constant grow of the residence tourism rendering in an extreme increment of urban areas, especially in those municipalities located in the coast. This expansión of urban áreas was carried out against rural and natural vegetated areas.

The region is characterised by very montanious topography, predominant impermeable rocks (shales, schists and peridotites) and abundant rainfalls from October to May, especially, in the western area (where a climatic gradient is observed from humid to dry conditions). All of these features, joined a very spread and intense occupation by urban, infrastructures and touristic land uses, renders in a very high vulnerability to fires and their consequences. As fire removes vegetation cover and accelerate water erosion, local relief and climatic conditions induce to extreme high risk of soil loss and floodings.

During the last 40 years, in the study area, the number of fires increased as weell as the affected area, following the similar trend for the rest of Spain and other Mediterranean countries. This situation increases the exposition to fire risk for more than one-million of people, which become at least two-millions during the summer months when fire conditions are expected.