

Interactive comment on “Change in tropical forest cover of Southeast Asia from 1990 to 2010” by H.-J. Stibig et al.

Anonymous Referee #3

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1. Good paper worthy of publication with minor revision.
2. Conversion of forest cover references are in some cases contradictory. For example, the abstract refers to conversion of forest to tree plantations as forest change and in other parts of the paper it is noted that the definition of forest includes forest plantations (eg section 2.2 lines 19-22). In the Discussion section (pg 11 lines 9-10) following the FRA definition as described in section 2.2 would mean including young forest plantations – but this section notes that your plantations are not included.
3. Introduction lines 8-20 notes differences in forest loss rates between FRA and estimates from Hansen and others. Key difference is that FRA is a landuse estimate and includes lands that have no current tree cover at all. Hansen and

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others have measured forest canopy cover only – which includes lands that are temporarily destocked.

4. Abstract and section 2.3 (lines 18-19) reference change patterns due to selective logging. While selective logging is often a pre-cursor to forest conversion, in many cases this process takes decades – or does not occur at all. The paper does not make a good case that detection of reduced canopy cover has been quantified. The only non-text presentation is the coarse scale change locations shown in Figure 4 which is not particularly compelling. My suggestion is to drop canopy cover reduction from the paper and focus on the change from forest to non-forest and possibly natural forest to plantation forest.
5. All of the changes discussed should also be presented as area values in tabular form. For example, natural forest to plantation forest numbers should be presented.

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