"El Niño" events recorded in dry-forest species of the lowlands of northwest Peru.

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RESUMEN:
The northwest coast of Peru (5°S, 80°W) is very sensitive to and impacted by the climate phenomenon El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO). Though mainly desert, this warm, dry region contains an equatorial dry forest. We report the first dendrochronological studies from this region and identify several species that have dendrochronological potential. Short ring-width chronologies of Palo Santo (*Bursera graveolens*) show a well-developed response to the ENSO signal over the last 50 years and good inter-site correlations. Preliminary isotopic studies in Algarrobo (*Prosopis* sp.) also show evidence of the 1997-98 El Niño event. ENSO events have a strong effect on the variability in the growth of several species and thereby on the economy of rural communities where the wood is used for housing, cooking, furniture, tools, fodder and medicinal uses. The extensive use of wood in archeological sites also offers the possibility of ultimately developing longer records for some of these species.

Key words:
Dendrochronology; ENSO; Tropical dry forest.