

Kenya Lake System in the Great Rift Valley (Kenya) (N 1060rev)

Report on State of Conservation, 2021

And

Implementation of Decision 44 COM 7B.175 of the World Heritage Committee

1. Executive Summary of the report

The Kenya Lake System in the Great Rift Valley component properties has in the past years undergone significant changes in the lake levels. This has resulted in an increase in lake area and depth. Lake Nakuru has been observed to increase in the area resulting in the lake extending beyond the park boundaries. Further, the lake depth has increased from 4 meters to 10 meters at the center of the lake. The lake water quality has changed from being hyper alkaline with a pH of 10.5 to 9.0. The flamingo populations recorded in the lake in the past have reduced to about 6,000 individuals. Nile tilapia have been recorded to have increased in large numbers within the lake.

The impacts of the rising lake levels in the other component properties namely Lake Bogoria has been the rise in lake levels and depth. All the three-component lake areas have increased with the submerging of the riparian land. There has been huge infrastructural damage due to the rising lake levels.

The government of Kenya responded by putting together in late 2020, a multi-agency team to undertake a scoping assessment on the impacts of the rising lake levels. The report recommended that there is a need to undertake the mapping and beaconing of the riparian land due to the current beacons being submerged. Continuous monitoring of the lake habitats, as well as reviewing the current zoning, was also recommended.

Kenya Wildlife Service has initiated discussion with the stakeholders living between lakes Nakuru and Naivasha with an aim of securing a wildlife corridor. A task force has been constituted, a concept with a work plan is also developed.

The Olkaria-Lessos-Kisumu powerline passing along Lake Elmentaita has been energized and the monitoring plan of the operation of the powerline as presented in the multi-agency team report is being implemented.

2. Response to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee-

Decision 44 COM 7B.175: Kenya Lake System in the Great Rift Valley (Kenya) (N 1060rev)

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/21/44.COM/7B,*
2. *Recalling Decisions **35 COM 8B.6, 39 COM 7B.5, 41 COM 7B.21 and 43 COM 7B.33**, adopted at its 35th (UNESCO, 2011), 39th (Bonn, 2015), 41st (Krakow, 2017) and 43rd (Baku, 2019) sessions respectively,*
3. *Notes with concern the impacts of the unusually high water levels in all components of the property, which is attributed to heavy rainfall, potentially as a result of climate change and exacerbated by the increasing deforestation, sewage loads and degradation of the catchments, and requests the State Party to monitor the impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and to consider potential adaptation measures and to develop a wastewater management strategy;*

Response by the State Party

The high-water levels as a result of primarily climate change and geological control phenomenon have been a concern to the Republic of Kenya and a multi-agency team led by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry undertook in late 2020, a detailed study in order to understand the phenomenon. The study included the Lakes Bogoria, Elmenteita and Nakuru that were affected by the rising lake levels. The scoping report recommends that the Nakuru County Sewage Treatment plant be rehabilitated as well as the other sewage systems. Other recommendations in the scoping report include the beaconing of the riparian land to reflect the new lake levels, monitoring of the lake water quality. The Republic of Kenya is continually implementing the immediate and short term interventions recommended in the report and at same time raising funds for

implementing activities recommended under the medium and long term interventions. The link to the document is hereby attached.

[http://www.environment.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/MENR Scoping Report Latest-5-07-21.pdf](http://www.environment.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/MENR_Scoping_Report_Latest-5-07-21.pdf).

4. *Welcomes the finalization of the Lake Bogoria National Reserve Management Plan 2019-2029, developed through wide community participation including with the Endorois Welfare Council, but also notes with concern the proposed zonation scheme, which could permit the construction of ecolodges along approximately half of the lake's shoreline and allow any type of visitor facility in the reserve's buffer zone, and reiterates its request to the State Party to develop and implement strict and clear regulations to prohibit developments in close proximity to fragile habitats and in the critical buffer zone to the property;*

Response by State Party

The Lake Bogoria National Reserve Management Plan 2019-2029 is being implemented by the County government of Baringo in collaboration with the Kenya Wildlife Service. The rising lake levels have damaged the infrastructure as well as impacted the zonation within the reserve. The zonation will be reviewed once the lake levels subside as the infrastructure is being rehabilitated. The Scoping report referred to in 3 above also outlines the impacts on the Lake Bogoria National Reserve as well as Lake Nakuru National Park infrastructure

5. *Notes with appreciation the State Party's work to redefine the boundaries of Lake Elementaita Wildlife Sanctuary to ensure the inclusion of riparian habitat in response to the lake level rise, in consultation with the community and stakeholders, and its commitment to developing a proposal for a minor boundary modification;*

Response by State Party

The lake Elmenteita Wildlife Sanctuary riparian boundaries have also been affected by the rising lake levels of the rift valley lakes in Kenya. A key recommendation in the scoping report is the surveying of the riparian land to reflect the new high water lake levels. This will be a multi-agency approach and the various government departments have been instructed to factor the activities in their budgets. The government is also fundraising for the implementation of the recommendations in the report.

6. *Specifically recalling Decision 35 COM 8B.6 requesting the State Party to improve the ecological connectivity between the Lake Nakuru and Elementaita components through wildlife corridors such as the Soysambu Conservancy, encourages the State Party to strongly consider the possible extension and formalization of the buffer zone between Lakes Elementaita and Nakuru to restore connectivity and further strengthen their protection, in consultation with local stakeholders and rights-holders;*

Response by State Party

Kenya through the Kenya Wildlife Service has initiated discussions with the stakeholders, landowners, and rights owners of the land between lake Nakuru National Park and the Lake Naivasha ecosystem. The objective of the discussions was to explore the possibility of securing a wildlife corridor between lakes Nakuru and Naivasha. The proposal included using already secured "Government land" in the form of wayleaves. There is a pipeline and powerline connecting the two properties and these are secured using a wayleave. A draft concept with a work plan and budget has been prepared and fundraising for the activity is ongoing. The concept is available on request.

7. *Also requests the State Party to integrate any changes or findings from the boundary modification exercise in the revision of the management plans for Lake Elmentaita Wildlife Sanctuary and Lake Nakuru National Park, and also ensure sensitive areas are protected from developments;*

Response by State Party

The boundary modification exercise within the Lake Elmentaita Wildlife Sanctuary property has not been completed. The State party is in the process of completing the Lake Elmenteita Wildlife Sanctuary Management Plan. The Lake Nakuru National Park Management Plan implementation committee is in place and has started the process of plan review.

8. *Also reiterates its request to the State Party to ensure a coordinated management system of the three components of the property in accordance with Paragraph 114 of the Operational Guidelines;*

Response by State Party

A coordinated management system of the three components has been discussed and agreed upon as per the meeting held in January Naivasha, 2020. Attached are the workshop proceedings on the same

9. Further notes with concern that the construction of the Olkaria-Lessos-Kisumu power transmission line proposed near Lake Elementaita has proceeded while there remains significant concern for the potential impacts of the project on the OUV of the property, urges the State Party to halt any further development of the transmission line until the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) on-the-spot appraisal mission has taken place and its recommendations made available, and encourages the State Party to continue its consultation with the Secretariat of AEWA, the World Heritage Centre and IUCN in addressing this issue;

Response by State Party

The powerline that was constructed is energized, and as per the recommendations of the joint Multi-agency team recommendations, the monitoring program is being implemented

10. Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 45th session.

11. Signature of the Authority



BRIG. (RTD.) JOHN M. WAWERU, EBS
DIRECTOR GENERAL,
KENYA WILDLIFE SERVICE

DATE: 23 MARCH 2022