

The Envisioning Framework for Conservation of Lake Kanyaboli as a Ramsar Site

by

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The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

The Ramsar treaty signed in 1971 in the city of Ramsar, Iran. The Treaty is an intergovernmental treaty which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. Currently 156 Parties to the Convention, with 1,676 wetland sites, totaling 150 million hectares, designated for inclusion in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance. Wetlands are defined to include rivers, lakes, swamps, and marine areas less than six metres in depth

Goals of the Ramsar Treaty

- Member countries of the treaty are obliged to manage all wetlands in a sustainable manner, promoting the wise use of all wetlands within their territory;
- consult with other Parties about the implementation of the Convention, especially with regard to trans-frontier wetlands, shared water systems, shared species, and development;
- and designate wetlands that meet the criteria for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance for conservation.

The vision of the Ramsar List

- At COP7 in 1999, the Convention on Wetlands first adopted a *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance*
- To develop and maintain an international network of wetlands which are important for the conservation of global biological diversity and for sustaining human life through the maintenance of their ecosystem components, processes and benefits/services.

Objectives of the Ramsar List

- To establish national networks of Ramsar sites in each Contracting Party which fully represent the diversity of wetlands and their key ecological and hydrological functions.
- To contribute to maintaining global biological diversity through the designation and management of appropriate wetland sites
- To foster cooperation among Contracting Parties, the Convention's International Organization Partners, and local stakeholders in the selection, designation, and management of Ramsar sites
- To use the Ramsar site network as a tool to promote national, supranational/ regional, and international cooperation in relation to complementary environment treaties.

Target for the Ramsar List in 2010

- To ensure that the List of Wetlands of International Importance contains at least 2,500 sites covering 250 million hectares by 2010.

Kenya

- sovereign states are required under Article 2.4 to designate at least one site as a Wetland of International Importance.
- Article 2.2, states that "wetlands should be selected for the List on account of their international significance in terms of ecology, botany, zoology, limnology or hydrology.
- Kenya has five sites with total area of 101,849 Ha.

No.	Name of Wetland	Date	Size (Ha)	Location
1	Lake Nakuru	05/06/1990	18,800	00°24'S 036°05'E
2	Lake Naivasha	10/04/1995	30,000	00°46'S 036°22'E
3	Lake Bogoria	27/08/2001	10,700	00°15'N 036°05'E
4	Lake Baringo	10/01/2002	31,469	00°32'N 036°05'E
5	Lake Elmenteita	05/09/2005	10,880	00°46'S 036°23'E

Lake Kanyaboli

- Lake Kanyaboli is located at the north-eastern corner of Lake Victoria. It has an average depth of 3 meters and covers a total area of 1,500 ha. It is one of the most important riparian satellite lakes around Lake Victoria. Lake Kanyaboli is part of the Yala swamp, which forms the mouth of both Rivers Nzoia and Yala.
- The lake is a freshwater deltaic wetland arising from backflow of water from Lake Victoria as well as the rivers' floodwaters. It provides a very important habitat for refugee populations of certain fish species, which have otherwise disappeared from Lake Victoria.

Strategies

- Education (Lobby and Advocacy)
- Detailed study for the establishment of a sustainable monitoring programme
- production of a Ramsar site management plan
- partnership

Lessons to be learnt from the project

- Research findings on lake ecosystems/water bird species will be submitted to Lake management committee and KWS and to be incorporated into global accessible websites, and local databases
- Health concepts should be incorporated
- Community Education: It is usually important to gain the support of communities around a wetland. Through developing a community education programme, the key audiences can be identified. These audiences can influence the management and protection of a wetland. Decision-makers are obviously a key audience
- Probably the only way to ensure the long-term conservation of this wetland jewel will be through effective education programmes