

ACARE-Annual Meeting of the African Great Lakes Stakeholders Network



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Presentation Outline

- ❖ **Biogeography of the Lake Malawi/Niassa/Nyasa**
- ❖ **Brief Overview of the lake**
- ❖ **Advisory Group Founding: Goals and Objectives, and membership**
- ❖ **2024 Critical Objectives: Priorities, Achievements, lessons learnt, and key takeaways**

Biogeography of the Lake Malawi/Nyasa/Niassa

It is the southern most lake of the Great Rift Valley lakes, bordered by Malawi, Mozambique, and Tanzania ($9^{\circ}30' - 14^{\circ}40'S$, $33^{\circ}50' - 33^{\circ}36'E$)

It is the ninth largest in the world and third largest in Africa (630km long, 87km wide, surface area $30,800\text{km}^2$, volume $8,400\text{km}^3$);

Prodigiously deep - third deepest freshwater lake in the world (Max 785m, Mean 264m); and

The Ichthyofauna of the lake is marked by high species richness (800 to 1000) mainly cichlids with 99% endemism, making it the most fish species-rich lake in the world.

It has Crystal-Clear Waters with Secchi disk transparency 12 – 20m



Brief Overview of the lake

- ❖ **Lake Malawi plays a vital role in supporting local communities through fishing;**
- ❖ **It is a UNESCO World Heritage site;**
- ❖ **Like other Great Lakes, LMNN faces major critical threats which include overuse of fish resources, invasive species, habitat degradation and deforestation, pollution, and climate change;**
- ❖ **These threats can have profound effects on the ecosystems and communities surrounding the lakes;**
- ❖ **Also, due to its multi-jurisdictional nature, LMNN faces challenges of disparate research efforts and capacity by the different countries, often leading to imbalances in contributions, benefits, and only a partial understanding of the lake resource.**

Advisory Group Founding Goal

- **The GOAL for establishing Lake Malawi/Nyasa/Niassa Basin Fisheries and Aquaculture Network (LMNNBFAN) - To enhance communication and collaboration among its members in order to conduct research and address issues that impact the health of the lake and surrounding communities, in particular with respect to fisheries and aquaculture development (Entebbe report 2019).**
- **Currently, Lake Malawi/Niassa/Nyasa Basin Fisheries & Aquaculture Network (LMNNBFAN) has 14 members from Malawi, 3 from Mozambique, and 6 from Tanzania**

Specific objectives of LMNNBFAN

Specific objectives or issues to address include:

- To determine the current status of the lake through baseline surveys, which may entail desk reviews and field surveys;**
- To share knowledge and experiences about best management practices for fisheries and aquaculture development in the basin;**
- To positively influence the development of fisheries and aquaculture in the basin using science, stakeholder consultation, civic education, community engagement, and other strategies;**

Specific objectives of LMNBNBFAN

- **To Propose measures for building the resilience of the local communities to address the impacts of climate change.**
- **To Prioritize research focus and needs on Lake Malawi/Nyasa/Niassa Basin fisheries and aquaculture development; and**
- **To Establish collaborative, cross-basin projects between lakes and across sectors, e.g., Lake Tanganyika Advisory Group, Lake Victoria Advisory Group**
- **To Support the women on the African continent in the participation and advocacy in science or science-related programs benefiting the communities;**

Immediate challenges

- **Lack of a regional institution to coordinate policies and regulations for management of shared resources.**

The other African Great Lakes have the following institutions are:-

Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization (LVFO),

Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) of Lake Victoria,

Lake Tanganyika Authority (LTA) of Lake Tanganyika, and

The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) for Lakes Edward and Albert

- **Lack of funds to address the specific objectives.**
- **The lake is threatened by climate change, invasive species, habitat loss and pollution**
- **Use of destructive fishing gear and methods have contributed to the decline of valuable fishery and habitat degradation**

2024 Critical Objectives: Reflections on the Priorities

NO	Activity	Status
1	Registration of the international research body	Completed
2	Submission of riparian research agenda by country	Completed
3	Hold in-person/virtual meetings to harmonize the research agenda and align with SADC/AU	Not Done
4	Establish and operationalize the organogram to include various committees (policy, science, communication, and resource mobilization)	???
5	Participation in the eDNA sampling exercise on the LMNN Basin	Completed
6	Conduct capacity needs assessment and harmonize data collection methods in the three riparian countries	Not Done
7	Mobilize financial resources, at least \$15000, for in-person meetings and other emerging programs by the end of the year	Proposal Developed
8	Establish Country teams and increase memberships specifically for Tanzania and Mozambique	Good Progress

2024 Critical Objectives: Key Achievements & Takeaways

By addressing the critical objectives the following have been achieved:-

- a) Process of registration of the international research body has progressed well;
- b) LMNNBFAN Advisory monthly meetings varied agenda has proceeded smoothly;
- c) A concept note to mobilize financial resources for in-person meetings has been developed;
- d) The use of Decision Support System (DSS) in Fisheries Management as a tool that integrate data, models, and technology to assist policymakers, managers, and stakeholders in making informed and sustainable decisions about fisheries resources has been given priority for testing in Lake MNN.

2024 Critical Objectives: Lessons & Areas of Improvement

- There is an urgent need for the Advisory Group to be known to the riparian authorities and communities
- Riparian research institutions lack coordination
- Monthly zoom/virtual meetings need to be complimented with quarterly in-person meetings
- Some critical objectives could not be implemented due to lack of funds
- As a way forward there is need to draft more proposals to seek funds for implementation of the planned activities
- Increase membership especially representatives from Mozambique
- There is need to carry out a reflection of the 2024 critical objectives
- Determine smart critical objectives for 2025



Lake Malawi/Nyasa/Niassa
Basin Fisheries and Aquaculture Network

LMBFAN

Thank you

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