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Effectiveness of co-management regime in African Great Lakes Fishery: A case study along Lake Baringo Kenya

There is a common agreement that establishment of co-management through beach management units (BMUs) could be of benefit to fisher community and other stakeholders across the African Great Lakes as regards to promoting community livelihoods and sustainability of the fishery and lakes ecosystem. However, the effectiveness of established co-management regimes remains unknown. This study evaluated the effectiveness of established co-management units specifically the Beach Management Units (BMU's) along Lake Baringo. Information and data was collected through site observations, and questionnaire led interviews involving the key informants and BMU members. The study reported presence of illegal gears (5.7%), pollution (10.2%), insecurity (3.4%) and targeting of undersized fish (1.1%) among others. In order to manage the aforementioned, it was noted that the role of BMU's to curb or minimize such challenges was overall below 36% i.e. enforcement (17.6%), conflict resolution (33.8%), Welfare (35.5%) and awareness creation (13.2%). The existences of such measurable attributes are indicative of lack of effectiveness of co-management in Lake Baringo. Furthermore, key registers and records were known to most of the members although there were no signs of progressive growth in the BMU themselves, due to lack of continuous awareness creation amid the changing lake environmental conditions and dynamics in the specific species fishery. There is need to sustain the achievements so far attained in promoting improved co-management and ecosystem sustainability, as enforcement of laws and regulations can be a challenging undertaking without government support. County governments should ensure financial and material support in expanding capacity in co-management units to perform, promoting alternative livelihoods, establishment of good educational and health facilities for easy access by fishing communities and provision of solar power, electricity, and better road networks to existing and new co-management units before establishments.

Keywords

Lake Baringo; Co-management, BMUs; effectiveness; fisheries.

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