

Abstract

During the second half of the last century, the Lake Victoria ecosystem has undergone drastic ecological changes. Most notable has been the decline in the populations of many endemic cichlid fishes. The lake has lost nearly 200 haplochromines and one tilapiine, *Oreochromis esculentus*. The above changes have been attributed to effects of species stocking and, in particular, from predation pressure by the introduced Nile perch, *Lates niloticus*. Other factors that have led to the decline of the endemic species include intensive non-selective fishing, extreme changes in the drainage basin, increased eutrophication, and the invasion of the lake by the water hyacinth, *Eichhornia crassipes*. However, the remnants of some species that had disappeared from Lake Victoria occur abundantly in the Yala Swamp lakes (Kanyaboli, Sare and Namboyo). This paper discusses the biodiversity of the swamp and the three lakes and gives suggestions for their conservation.

Keywords: Biological diversity Lake Victoria Threats and conservation Yala Swamp lakes