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Abstract

There have been concerns about the declining fish catches and fisheries ecosystem health for a number of fisheries including Lake Victoria. Consequently, a co-management system has been introduced as a means of, among others, reversing the declining catches. It is hypothesized that non-involvement of fishers in the management of the lake's fisheries is a major reason for the ever-decreasing catches. This chapter discusses this particular management regime and its application in the lake's fisheries. The analysis is based on data collected by the Fisheries Division since co-management was introduced in the lake in 1998. The chapter traces the lake's fishery management since the pre-colonial to the post-colonial period. It presents the aim and rationale for managing the lake's fishery, the structure of the management and roles of governors. It also analyses trends in illegal fishing practices as well as enforcement performance. The argument here is that co-management has helped in bringing on board fishers and this has enabled laws and regulations to be implemented in a much better way than they were under a central-command system. The chapter subsequently concludes that the involvement of fishing communities in the management of fisheries has created a forum for the exchange of ideas, knowledge and experience on the resources. This strategy has made the communities understand the importance of compliance to the law and regulations and effective management measures.

Keywords

Lake Victoria; Co-management; Fisheries management; Fisheries laws; Fisheries regulations