



Ramsar Sites Information Service

Annotated List of Wetlands of International Importance

Kenya

6 Ramsar Site(s) covering 265,449 ha

Lake Baringo

Site number: 1,159 | Country: Kenya | Administrative region: Baringo district

Area: 31,469 ha | Coordinates: 00°32'N 36°05'E | Designation dates: 10-01-2002

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Lake Baringo. 10/01/02; Rift Valley Province; 31,469 ha; 00°32'N 036°05'E. National Reserve. Consists of one of the two important freshwater (less alkaline) lakes in the primarily arid Kenyan Rift Valley and its surrounding riparian zones; the central island Ol Kokwe embodies the remains of a small volcano. It is part of the Great Rift Valley system of faults and cliffs and is fed by several freshwater inflows from the Mau and Tugen hills. The lake provides critical habitat and refuge for nearly 500 bird species, and some of the migratory waterbird species are of regional and global conservation significance, with more than 20,000 individuals reported. The lake is an invaluable habitat for seven freshwater fish species, of which one (the tilapia *Oreochromis niloticus baringoensis*) is endemic to the lake. Local fisheries are particularly important for sustainable development of the local communities, for both economic and sport fishing. In addition, the site is a habitat for many species of animals, such as hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibious*), crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*) and a wide range of mammals, amphibians, reptiles and invertebrate communities. Four ethnic communities around the lake depend upon it for food, through fishing, and for water supply, and a diversity of traditional religious functions are served by the lake and surrounding escarpments. Longterm overgrazing and deforestation and diversion for irrigation of water from one of the inflowing rivers are seen as potential pressures, as are alien invasive species, such as *Pistia* (Nile cabbage), and the use of motor boats by water sports, but the site's rich natural and cultural attractions, if well-managed, promise sound ecotourism development. A visitors' centre is in place and a management plan in preparation; a GEF project for biodiversity conservation is under way. Reprint of the RIS. Ramsar site no. 1159. Most recent RIS information: 2001.

Lake Bogoria

Site number: 1,097 | Country: Kenya | Administrative region: Baringo and Koibatek districts

Area: 10,700 ha | Coordinates: 00°15'N 36°05'E | Designation dates: 27-08-2001

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Lake Bogoria. 27/08/01; Rift Valley Province; 10,700 ha; 00°15'N 036°05'E. National Reserve. An alkaline soda lake hydrologically dominated by hot springs, located in Gregory Eastern Rift Valley, the site provides critical refuge for the lesser flamingo (*Phoenicopterus minor*), with a population of 1 to 1.5 million, and has high biodiversity values for more than 300 waterbird species. The shoreline fringe and associated acacia woodland provide critical habitat for the endangered Greater Kudu (*Tragelaphus streptoceros*) and other mammals. The lake's stable water level makes it doubly important during periods of drought which reduce levels in other East African lakes. Regional climate is arid to semi-arid with low rainfall reliability. Tugen and Jemps pastoralists live in the area, and livestock grazing is the main land use in the site, but tourism, attracted to the wildlife, hot springs, spectacular cliffs and escarpments, and the rich indigenous culture, brings 200,000 visitors annually; in addition, the geysers are thought by some to have medicinal value. Incidents of flamingo mortality, perhaps attributable to algal toxins or heavy metal concentrations, are puzzling and a cause of concern. A new management plan is in preparation and a visitors' centre is in place. Ramsar site no. 1097. Most recent RIS information: 2001.

Lake Elmenteita

Site number: 1,498 | Country: Kenya | Administrative region: Nakuru District

Area: 10,880 ha | Coordinates: 00°46'S 36°22'59"E | Designation dates: 05-09-2005

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Lake Elmenteita. 05/09/05; Rift Valley Province; 10,880 ha; 00°46'S 036°23'E. A shallow saline, alkaline lake which provides a favorable environment for diatoms and the blue-green alga *Spirulina platensis*, which lie at the basis of the food chain of several bird species. An average of over 610,000 birds of more than 450 species (of which 80 are waterfowl) have been counted in the area, and the lake hosts an average of 28.5% of the world population of Lesser Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus minor*). During the dry season, black lava islands provide the only suitable nesting and breeding grounds for Great White Pelicans (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*) in the Rift Valley region. Local inhabitants depend on the hot springs around Chamka for domestic freshwater supply, subsistence irrigation, and water for livestock, and the nomadic Maasai use the area as a grazing and salt-licking site for their livestock. Salt, sand and diatomite are mined from the site, but most of the land around the site is reserved for biodiversity conservation. Tourism and recreational facilities are an important foreign exchange earner and employer, and the local community has formed various conservation committees. Ramsar site no. 1498. Most recent RIS information: 2005.

Lake Naivasha

Site number: 724 | Country: Kenya | Administrative region: Nakuru District
Area: 30,000 ha | Coordinates: 00°46'S 36°22'E | Designation dates: 10-04-1995
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Lake Naivasha. 10/04/95; Rift Valley Province; 30,000 ha; 00°46'S 036°22'E. Located in a high altitude trough of the Rift Valley, one of the few freshwater lakes in eastern Africa. The site comprises a crater lake, river delta, and a separate lake dominated by blue-green algae and soda-tolerant plants. It supports a complex vegetation of terrestrial (*Acacia xanthophloea*), riparian and littoral plants such as papyrus and *Potamogeton*, providing foraging and breeding ground for many resident and migrant bird species, including more than 350 species of waterbirds, with 1% of the world population of *Fulica cristata*. Hundreds of hippopotamus and several species of large mammals including buffalo and waterbuck live in the riparian area. People depend on the lake for their water supply, and human activities include wildlife and livestock ranching, agriculture, tourism, pastoralism and fishing - the most significant activity, however, is intensive greenhouse floriculture and horticulture: Kenya is the leading exporter of cut flowers and Naivasha supplies about 75% of these. Although the sector employs thousands of Kenyans and significantly contributes to the GDP, it also poses a threat due to pesticide and fertilizer use, removal of fringing swamps, and over-abstraction of water. The Lake Naivasha Riparian Association (LNRA), one of the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award winners in 1999, has been at the forefront in finding solutions to land use conflicts in collaboration with Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and other relevant government departments. Ramsar site no. 724. Most recent RIS information: 2005.

Lake Nakuru

Site number: 476 | Country: Kenya | Administrative region: Nakuru District
Area: 18,800 ha | Coordinates: 00°24'S 36°04'59"E | Designation dates: 05-06-1990
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Lake Nakuru. 05/06/90; Rift Valley Province; 18,800 ha; 00°24'S 036°05'E. National Park. A very shallow, strongly alkaline lake, with surrounding woodland and grassland, fed by four seasonal rivers and the permanent Ngosur River. A number of ecosystems including sedge marshes, seasonally flooded and dry grasslands, swampland riparian forests, and various types of scrubland support some globally endangered mammal species such as the black rhino and the hippo, as well as regionally endangered bird species like the African Darter (*Anhinga rufa*), Great Egret, the range-restricted Grey-crested Helmet-shrike, the Lesser kestrel and the Madagascar pond heron. Tourism is the only activity within the national park, with over 300,000 local and foreign holiday-makers annually. Archeological caves used by early man are found in the area. Small to large-scale agriculture is the largest land use activity nearby, mostly wheat, barley, maize, coffee and potato crops; beef and dairy farming is also practiced in the area, some of which is for commercial production. The main threats within the site include invasive plant species and fencing, which prevents animal migrations - within the catchment, however, threats include the expansion of Nakuru township, forestry, and agricultural activities which worsen water quality and increase erosion and sedimentation. Ramsar site no. 476. Most recent RIS information: 2005.

Tana River Delta Ramsar Site

Site number: 2,082 | Country: Kenya | Administrative region: Coast Province, Tana Delta and Lamu Districts

Area: 163,600 ha | Coordinates: 02°27'S 40°16'59"E | Designation dates: 09-07-2012

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Tana River Delta Ramsar Site. 07/09/2012; Coast Province; 163,600 ha; 02°27'S 040°17'E. Important Bird Area (IBA). The second most important estuarine and deltaic ecosystem in Eastern Africa, comprising a variety of freshwater, floodplain, estuarine and coastal habitats with extensive and diverse mangrove systems, marine brackish and freshwater intertidal areas, pristine beaches and shallow marine areas, forming productive and functionally interconnected ecosystems. This diversity in habitats permits diverse hydrological functions and a rich biodiversity including coastal and marine prawns, shrimps, bivalves and fish, five species of threatened marine turtles and IUCN red-listed African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*), Tana Mangabey (*Cercocebus galerritus*), Tana River Red Colobus (*Procolobus rufomitratus rufomitratus*) and White-collared Monkey (*Cercopithecus mitis albotorquatus*). Over 600 plant species have been identified, including the endangered *Cynometra lukei* and *Gonatopus marattioides*. As one of the only estuarine staging posts on the West Asia - Eastern Africa coastal flyway, it is a critical feeding and wintering ground for several migratory waterbirds such as waders, gulls and terns. The main human activities include fishing, small-scale family-oriented agriculture, mangrove wood exploitation, grazing, water supply, tourism and research (ongoing research on the protection and monitoring of breeding turtles and the conservation of dugongs). Ramsar site no. 2082. Most recent RIS information 2012.