



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 County
Area: 31,469 ha | Coordinates: 00°36'08"N 36°04'45"E | Designation dates: 10-01-2002
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Lake Baringo is a freshwater lake located in the eastern arm of the Great Rift Valley. Several seasonal rivers drain into the Lake, and others which are perennial but with significantly reduced flows during the dry season. The Lake provides critical habitat and refuge for nearly 500 species of birds including some migratory waterbirds. It is also an invaluable habitat for seven freshwater fish species, including the tilapia *Oreochromis niloticus baringoensis*, which is endemic to the lake. In addition, the Site provides habitat for a wide range of mammals, amphibians, reptiles and invertebrate communities including hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*) and Nile crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*). The Site is important to local communities as a source of water for domestic use and livestock. Four ethnic communities around the lake depend on it for food, fishing and water supply, and a variety of traditional religious functions are served by the Lake and its surrounding escarpments. Long-term overgrazing and deforestation and the diversion of water from one of the inflowing rivers for irrigation are seen as potential pressures, as are alien invasive species such as Nile cabbage (*Pistia stratiotes*). The Site has a visitor centre, and a management plan was being prepared as of 2024.

Lake Bogoria

Site number: 1,097 | Country: Kenya | Administrative region: Baringo County
Area: 10,700 ha | Coordinates: 00°15'55"N 36°06'11"E | Designation dates: 27-08-2001
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Lake Bogoria is an alkaline soda lake in the Great Rift Valley of East Africa, which is dominated by hot springs. The Site is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA). Its rich biodiversity supports more than 300 waterbird species; and an important stopover site for a population of up to 1.5 million migratory birds, such as the lesser flamingo (*Phoeniconaias minor*). Its shoreline and associated acacia woodlands provide critical habitat for vulnerable species such as the common hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*) and African lion (*Panthera leo*), and other important species such as the greater kudu (*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*). The lake's stable water level makes it doubly important during periods of drought, when water levels in other East African lakes drop. The area is inhabited by Tugen and Jemps pastoralists, and livestock grazing is the main land use in the area, but tourism brings 200,000 visitors a year, who are attracted by the wildlife, hot springs, spectacular cliffs and escarpments and rich indigenous culture. In addition, the geysers are believed by some to have medicinal value. The Site has a management plan.

Lake Elmenteita

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

Area: 10,880 ha | Coordinates: 00°28'19"S 36°14'24"E | Designation dates: 05-09-2005

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Lake Elmenteita is a shallow, saline alkaline lake that provides a favourable environment for diatoms and blue-green algae (*Spirulina platensis*), which are at the base of a food chain which supports a rich bird life. On average a population of over 610,000 birds of more than 450 species (including 80 waterfowl) have been counted at the Site. The Lake hosts an average of over 28% of the world's population of lesser flamingo (*Phoeniconaias minor*). During the dry season, the black lava islands provide the only suitable nesting and breeding habitat in the Rift Valley region for white pelicans (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*). Local people depend on the hot springs around Chamka for domestic water supply, subsistence irrigation and livestock watering, and the nomadic Maasai use the area as a grazing and salt-licking area for their livestock. Salt, sand and diatomaceous earth are mined from the Site, but most of the land around the Site is set aside for biodiversity conservation. Tourism and recreational facilities are an important source of foreign exchange income and employment. The local community has formed several conservation committees, and a management plan for the Site was being prepared as of 2024.

Lake Naivasha

Site number: 724 | Country: Kenya | Administrative region: Nakuru

Area: 30,000 ha | Coordinates: 00°44'35"S 36°21'04"E | Designation dates: 10-04-1995

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Lake Naivasha is a shallow freshwater lake in the southern Rift Valley, surrounded by acacia woodlands. The Lake is considered to be of recent geological origin and is ringed by extinct or dormant volcanoes. It is fed by the perennial Malewa and Gilgil Rivers, which drain the Aberdare Mountains of central Kenya. Although the Lake has no visible outlet, its water is fresh; it is thought that a combination of underground seepage and sedimentation of salts keeps the lake fresh, unlike other endorheic lakes in the eastern Rift Valley. Papyrus reeds (*Cyperus papyrus*) line much of the shoreline, with variable areas of submerged plants such as Potamogeton species, and floating rafts of the exotic water hyacinth *Eichhornia crassipes*. Lake Naivasha is a highly significant national freshwater resource in an otherwise water-scarce area, supporting a diverse community of waterbirds and many large mammals. In addition to the invaluable freshwater, it also supports large-scale and vital economic activities, mainly flower growing, fishing and geothermal power generation. The ecology of the Lake and its surroundings is fragile, with dynamic ecosystems and a still uncertain water balance in a basin surrounded by intensively irrigated agricultural land and a rapidly growing township.

Lake Nakuru

Site number: 476 | Country: Kenya | Administrative region: Nakuru County

Area: 18,800 ha | Coordinates: 00°23'26"S 36°05'47"E | Designation dates: 05-06-1990

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Lake Nakuru is a very shallow, highly alkaline lake with surrounding forests and grasslands fed by four seasonal rivers and the perennial Ngosur River. A range of ecosystems including sedge swamps, seasonally flooded and dry grasslands, floodplain forests and various types of scrubland support some globally threatened mammal species such as the critically endangered African black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*) and the vulnerable common hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*), and regionally threatened bird species such as the African darter (*Anhinga rufa*) and the great egret (*Ardea alba*). The Site supports a large population of lesser flamingo (*Phoeniconaias minor*). The introduction of the fish species Magadi tilapia (*Oreochromis grahami*) in the Lake in the 1960s attracted some other secondary consumers, including several fish-eating bird species. There has also been an accidental introduction of the Nile tilapia (*Oreochromis nilotica*) that increased numbers of freshwater piscivorous bird species. Tourism is the main activity within the Site and attracts over 300,000 national and foreign vacationers annually. Threats within the park include invasive plant species and fencing that prevents animal migration, while threats within the Lake's catchment include the expansion of Nakuru town, forestry and agricultural activities that degrade water quality and increase erosion and sedimentation.

Tana River Delta Ramsar Site

Site number: 2,082 | Country: Kenya | Administrative region: Tana River County

Area: 163,600 ha | Coordinates: 02°29'30"S 40°17'11"E | Designation dates: 09-07-2012

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Tana River Delta Ramsar Site is an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) and the is the second most important estuarine and deltaic ecosystem in East Africa, with diverse freshwater, floodplain, estuarine and coastal habitats featuring extensive and varied mangrove systems, pristine beaches and shallow marine areas. This diversity of habitats contributes to the the ecological functions of the delta, enabling it to support a rich diversity of plants and animals. The delta is vital to the survival of many threatened species such as the critically endangered *Dugong dugon* and Aders' duiker (*Cephalophus adersi*), the endangered Tana River mangabey (*Cercocebus galeritus*) and Tana River Red colobus (*Piliocolobus rufomitratu*s), and the African savanna elephant (*Loxodonta africana*). It also provides habitat for several marine species, including shrimp, crabs, mussels and fish, and is an important feeding and wintering area for migratory waterbirds, including wading birds, gulls and terns. It has over 600 plant species, including the endangered *Cynometra lukei* and *Gonatopus marattioides*. Human activities in the delta include fishing, small-scale family farming, mangrove wood harvesting, livestock grazing, tourism and also research, including ongoing protection and monitoring of nesting turtles and conservation of dugong.