

Development of Intervention Policy Options for Sustainable Fisheries Management of Lake Hawassa, Ethiopia

Authors : Mekonen Hailu, Gashaw Tesfaye, Adamneh Dagne, Hiwot Teshome

Abstract : Lake Hawassa is one of the most important lakes for Ethiopian fishery. It serves as a source of food and nutrition, income and livelihood for many inhabitants. However, the fishery in Lake Hawassa shows a declining trend, especially for the most valuable species, such as the Nile tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus* L.), indicating that the existing management systems are either not fully enforced or inadequate. The aim of this study was therefore to develop management policy options for the sustainable utilization and management of fishery resources in Lake Hawassa. A blend of primary and secondary data was used for the study. Primary data were collected using Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques such as focus group discussions with members of fishing co-operatives, co-operative leaders and key informant discussion to understand the current state of the fisheries resources. Then literatures were reviewed to obtain secondary data and develop alternative management policy options. It has been realized that Lake Hawassa is not very species-rich in terms of fish diversity. It contains only six species belonging to four families, of which only three are commercially important, including the Nile tilapia (90 % of catches), the African catfish *Clarias gariepinus* B. (7 % of catches) and the African large barb *Labeobarbus intermedius* R. (only 3 % of catches). The production has been declining since 2007. The top six challenges that could be responsible for this decline, identified by about two-thirds of respondents and supported by the literature review, are directly linked to fisheries and fisheries management, with overfishing, irregular monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) system and the lack of a fishing licensing system ranking first, second and third respectively. It is, therefore, important to address these and other problems identified in the study. Of the management options analyzed, we suggest adapting the management approach to sustain the fishery in Lake Hawassa and its socio-economic benefits. We also present important conditions for successfully implementing co-management in this and other lakes in Ethiopia.

Keywords : comanagement, community-based management, fishery, overfishing, participatory approach, top-down management

Conference Title : ICFAS 2025 : International Conference on Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences

Conference Location : Toronto, Canada

Conference Dates : July 19-20, 2025