Fish Diversity of Two Lacustrine Wetlands of the Upper Benue Basin, Nigeria

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Abstract : A study was conducted at River Mayo Ranewo and River Lau, Taraba State Nigeria. The two rivers empty into the Upper Benue Basin. A survey of visual encounter was conducted within the two wetlands from June to August, 2014. The fish record was based entirely on landings of fishermen, number of canoes that land fish was counted, types of nets and baits used on each sampling day. Fishes were sorted into taxonomic groups, identified to family/ species level, counted and weighed in groups by species. Other aquatic organisms captured by the fishermen were scallops, turtles and frogs. The relative species abundance was determined by dividing the number of species from a site by the total number of species from all tributaries/sites. The fish were preserved in 2% formaldehyde solution and taken to the laboratory, were identified through keys of identification to African fishes and field guides. Shannon-Wieiner index of species diversity indicated that the diversity was highest at River Mayo Ranewo than River Lau. Results showed that at River Mayo Ranewo, the family Mochokidae recorded the highest (23.15%), followed by Mormyridae (22.64%) and the least was the family Lepidosirenidae (0.04%). While at River Lau, the family Mochokidae recorded the highest occurrence of (24.1%), followed by Bagridae (20.20%), and then Mormyridae, which also was the second highest in River Lau, with 18.46% occurrence. There was no occurrence of Malapteruridae and Osteoglossidae (0%) in River Lau, but the least occurrence was the family Gymnarchidae (0.04%). According to the result from the t-test, the fish composition was not significantly different ($p \le 0.05$).

Keywords : Diversity Index, Lau, Mayo Ranewo, Wetlands
Conference Title : ICSRD 2020 : International Conference on Scientific Research and Development
Conference Location : Chicago, United States
Conference Dates : December 12-13, 2020