

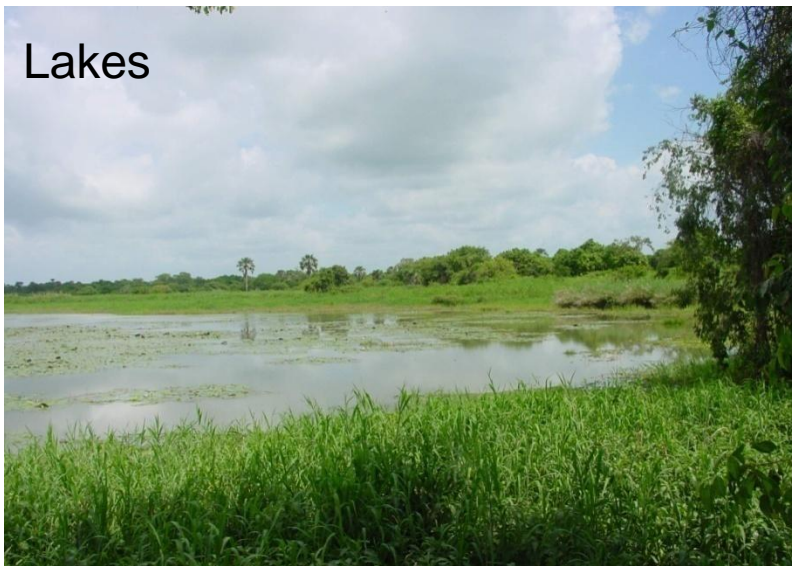
East African Coastal Wetlands as Natural and Cultural Heritage

An aerial photograph of a coastal wetland area. A large, winding river with a reddish-brown hue flows through the landscape, surrounded by dense green vegetation. In the upper left, there are several interconnected water bodies. In the center, a town or village is visible, characterized by a cluster of buildings and a network of roads. The overall scene depicts a rich, natural environment with human settlement.

KENWEB

**WANJA NYINGI, COORDINATOR – KENWEB
KENYA WETLANDS BIODIVERSITY RESEARCH TEAM**

2 Coastal deltaic ecosystems which are mosaics of:



They share 2 characteristics :

1 - flood-dependent ecosystems 2 – High Biodiversity

High Biodiversity



Water Birds



Fishes



Coastal Forest



Tana Red Colobus and Tana Mangabey

Productive ecosystems sustain wide range of socio-economic activities and its associated specific socio-cultural practices

Recession
Agriculture



Forest exploitation



Fisheries



Livestock keeping



POKOMO

ORMA

Close link between wetland and identity

- A lot of symbolism in link with the forest and the river
For example in Rufiji a Taboo existed of not cutting the big trees without the authorization of the forest spirit
- Complex rules for access and sharing of pastures, land and water between the different users group

Challenges for the Present and the Future

**How to keep a functional wetland
with both its ecosystem services, its
associated livelihoods and a living culture?**

Role of International recognition:

their designation as (wetlands of international importance) Ramsar sites

Ramsar convention

Ramsar convention (1971) lists the wetlands of international

- Rufiji delta was registered in 2003
- Tana delta : in process

The objective is less the registration in itself, but more of wetlands management in a sustainable way, respectful of the local communities practices.

How to register AND empower the local communities?

Within the Ramsar site the objective is to design **co-management** of natural resources with the local communities



Following a few key principles of co-management
Borrini and al. 2004, sharing power :

- Develop trust
- Take into account the diversity of interests within the communities
- Initiate a flexible iterative negotiation process (with adjustments, re-elaboration)
- Build on customary and local organisations

TRIBAL CLASHES IN THE TANA DELTA 2012

KENWEB in 2011 – Tana Delta, a wetlands
on the balance

In it, testimonies of communities with
resounding message: dissatisfaction with
present developments; lack of equitable
resource sharing and facilitation by
government.

We projected trouble in the future!



WHY THE CLASHES NOW:

Resource competition ALWAYS brings conflict – historically Orma and Pokomo have always competed, but its exacerbated by political and commercial interests = biofuels; more dams; land grabbing; water abstraction

KENWEB AND IPSI

Several partners/members have experience in socio-economic and local communities – hope to learn from lessons from partners on methodologies to apply in peace making and bringing the message of resource sharing to policy makers.