

Abstract

Lake Kanyaboli and the surrounding Yala Swamp wetland have been recognized as an important biodiversity hotspot. Recent population, genetic and phylogenetic studies confirm the evolutionary importance of Lake Kanyaboli in preserving the *cichlid* fish fauna of Lake Victoria. The adjoining Yala Swamp harbours the endangered swamp antelope Sitatunga (*Tragecephalus speki*) and several papyrus endemic birds. The lake and adjoining swamp play a critical role in the livelihood of the local communities who heavily depend on the wetland resources. Current ongoing large scale land use and changes within the swamp threaten the ecological integrity and functioning of this highly dynamic wetland ecosystem. It is therefore imperative that proper management and conservation measures are put in place to protect Lake Kanyaboli and the associated Yala Swamp. This paper presents a review of the biodiversity of Lake Kanyaboli and the associated wetland and the threats this ecosystem has to face. Polycultural *finger-ponds* aquaculture (see Figure 3), tourism and papyrus based industries as well as an all-stakeholders-driven management plan is suggested as a step towards achieving sustainable management, utilization and conservation of the Lake Kanyaboli ecosystem.