

Abstract

Fish farming has gained importance in the provision of dietary protein in Kenya. Many challenges have faced the sector from water to predation in semi- arid regions. This study therefore sought to assess the prevalence, the socio - economic impacts and control measures of predators in fish farming in Kitui County. Data was collected from 110 ponds in 7 sub-counties. Data collection involved questionnaires, key informant interviews and field observations. Collected data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics whereby inferences were made informing the study objectives and making conclusions. The study found that fish predation is at 93% level, with major predators being birds followed by reptiles, domestic animals, and wild animals like raccoons. Birds were found to be the major predators at 87%. The study found that 86% of the fish farmers have various predator control measures in place. The various predator control measures employed are only 37.9% effective leading to 69.5% of the fish farmers experiencing financial losses. The study found that fish predation has a negative effect on the socio-economic conditions of farmers. The study recommends that Kitui County government should integrate predator control training or information in their extension programs. Predator control innovations should also be developed to reduce the costs of controlling fish predators in the region. Further study should be undertaken to allow generalization of the study outcomes in other counties in Kenya.