

Editorial

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the first edition of “**Lakeside**”, the newsletter of the Lake Tanganyika Biodiversity Project. Owing to the ever increasing number and scope of project activities now in progress, we felt the time was ripe for a newsletter to keep everyone who is involved or interested as up to date as possible with the work being done by the project.

The project has encountered a number of difficulties in implementation - some would say more than its fair share! There have, of course, been the normal complications of implementing a project where the riparian member nations speak two different languages, where three of the member nations have their capitals (with the collaborating ministries and communications and economic infrastructure) located far from the resource of interest, i.e. The Lake, and where a wide range of institutions are involved with the project in each country. In addition the project has had to contend with the civil conflict which swept the former Zaïre, by the UN ‘Phase III’ security rating which until recently prohibited work along the Burundian coast, and by the embargo against Burundi.

In spite of these difficulties, project activities are well underway in all four riparian member countries. Some recent project highlights include: the 12-week dive training and underwater research methods course in Kigoma which graduated fully-certified divers from each of the four riparian countries who are beginning to study the aquatic life of Lake Tanganyika’s Parks and other areas of interest. In January, the sedimentation special study sponsored a second cruise to collect cores of sediment from the heavily impacted and relatively pristine catchments along the Burundian and Tanzanian coasts. The multinational team with participants from all four riparian countries, collected these cores to assess the effect that humans have had upon sedimentation rates in the lake basin. In February, lawyers and policy makers from the four riparian countries met in Lusaka to begin the vital process of drafting the legal agreement to be signed by the four riparian countries so as to assure a common level of measures to safeguard the lake. In addition to these multinational, co-operative events, the biodiversity, sedimentation, pollution, fishing practices and socio-economic work programs are being started or are well underway in the individual countries.

As we mentioned at the start, this newsletter has been created to keep you, the scientist, policy-maker, government official, collaborating NGO, riparian community member, or Tanganyika enthusiast, informed of project activities and project progress. As we were anxious to complete this first edition and publicise our presence, most of the articles were contributed by the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) or special studies coordinators. However, as LTBP is a project for Tanganyika’s riparian countries, driven by nationals from those countries, we intend that future editions will consist largely of contributions from African project members. We encourage you to volunteer contributions to the PCU and to co-operate when the PCU may solicit contributions from you.

We look forward to working with you,



-Andy Menz
Project Coordinator

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