Progress Report

MAY, 2023

TITLE: Conservation initiatives to protect the critically endangered Kampango (*Bagrus meridionalis*) in Lake Nyasa through community education and empowerment, Tanzania

ACTIVITY: Education and Awareness Campaign on Conserving Kampango (*Bagrus meridionalis*) in Lake Nyasa, Tanzania

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Lake Nyasa with an area of 31,000 km2 borders Tanzania (in the Songea region), Malawi and Mozambique is located between 9°30'–14°40'S and 33°50'–33°36'E. The lake is designated as a global heritage site due to its vastness and rich biodiversity. Like other African Great Lakes, Lake Nyasa, currently is most threatened by ***use of destructive fishing gear*** *and* ***overfishing***. Use of destructive fishing gear and methods contributed to the decline in catches of the highly valued '*Kampango-Bagrus meridionalis'* fishes, and, together with habitat degradation.

The conducted project activities aimed at providing conservation education and awareness to local communities adjacent to Lake Nyasa, fishermen, and fisheries officers about Kampango and the impact of human activities, i.e., illegal fishing and pollution so as to ensure a voluntary compliance to sustainable fishing by local fishermen in order to reduce the extinction risk of Kampango and improve its population.

2.0 ACTIVITIES

❖ Education and awareness raising

My team in collaboration with Social Health and Environmental Organization (SHEMO), visited four villages along the shore of lake Nyasa Tanzania such as Mbamba bay, Chinula, Lihuli and Chihihila and conducted the training for providing education and raising awareness on the status of the critically endangered kampango and conservation initiatives that should be taken to protect kampango from extinction risk and conserve their habitat. The training involved fishermen, fisheries officers and Beach Management Unit (BMU). Fisheries officers and BMU were trained to monitor and evaluate fishing status and utilization of Kampango for conservation and management plan of kampango and habitat. Also, the education on the impact of illegal fishing gears, overfishing and sustainable fishing were provided to fishers, because the most problems encountered during the survey were illegal fishing gears such as the use of monofilament and small mesh size fishing net.

3.0 CONCLUSION.

From the few villages visited, participants have shown interest in learning more about fishing technology and species available in Lake Nyasa so as they become more creative for proper way of fishing that increase fishing efficiency and reduce illegal fishing activities at the sensitive sites such as breeding and spawning sites.

5.0 ON GOING ACTIVITIES

Quantifying the number of *B. meridionalis* harvested by artisanal fishermen and identification of its age, length, fins, and weight will be measured. Also conducting interviews with the artisanal fishermen and fisheries officers about the number of Kampango being harvested per trip and their availability. The existing information from fisheries department and the information provided by fishers during the interview will be used as proxies to assess the population trend of *B. meridionalis* in Lake Nyasa Tanzania.

6.0 APENDIX: Plates

Plate 1: Training and awareness to BMUs leader and fishermen at Chihihila village

Plate 2: Meeting with fishermen at Chinula village for awareness conducted by the project team member

Plate 3: Training and awareness to BMUs leader and fishermen at Mbamba bay village

Plate 4: The hidden illegal fishing net (monofilament) observed during land sites visit