

## **PROJECT UPDATE**

**TITLE:** Strengthening the conservation of critically endangered kampango (*Bagrus meridionalis*) through population monitoring and livelihood projects in lake Nyasa Tanzania



**December, 2025**

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Lake Nyasa in southern Tanzania plays a vital role in supporting conservation of aquatic biodiversity and communities' livelihoods through fishing and water supply for domestic uses (Nindi, 2007). It is the home of a critically endangered fish species known as Kampango (*Bagrus meridionalis*). Despite the lake's importance for aquatic species, especially Kampango, human activities threaten its biological integrity. Overfishing and the use of poison and forbidden fishing nets, as well as a lack of understanding among local fishermen regarding *B. meridionalis*, are the greatest threats to the lake's and species' survival. These threats are potentially affecting natural processes driving *B. meridionalis* reproduction behaviour as they destroy and pollute foraging and breeding sites for this species. *B. meridionalis* is one of the targeted fish species by fishers and affected by these threats. This project is going to monitor the population of the critically endangered Kampango and introducing the alternative income generation activities so as to diversify the community's income and reduce the pressure on kampango fishing and habitat degradation.

The targeted communities along lake Nyasa are heavily rely on fishing activities as the sources of their income and livelihoods, introducing the other sources of income will help to diversify sources of income while reducing the fishing pressure. Also the population monitoring of Kampango will provide the information on the population trend and plan the management of species and habitat accordingly.

## 2.0 ACTIVITIES

### 2.1 Train 4 local data collectors on assessing the number of individuals, the weight of total catch, size, weight per individuals, sex and age structure

My team in collaboration with Social Health and Environmental Organization (SHEMO), visited and provided data collection training on how to assess the catch and biological information of the critically endangered Kampango to four local data collectors at four landing sites such as Mkwakwa, Chinula, Mhalo and Linda and data collection process already started.



### 2.2 Conduct stakeholders' meetings and workshops with each of the targeted communities to communicate the results of the project and its implications for the community's livelihood and their future and introduce potential strategies to achieve a viable population

Stakeholders' meetings and workshops conducted in each of the targeted communities to communicate the results of the project and its implications for the community's livelihood and their future and introduce potential strategies to achieve a viable population by the end of the project. This were followed by providing awareness on alternative income generation activities such as beekeeping and chicken raising for income diversification and sustainable fishing practices. Also during this meeting, four groups (one from each village) were formed and empowered with 40 beehives(10 per each group) and construction materials for chicken cages.



### 2.3 Interview at landing sites with fishers on the perception of fishers on the *B. meridionalis* abundance

Semi-structured interviews to assess fisheries operations across kampango landing sites in Lake Nyasa Tanzania were also conducted to collect information on landing sites/ patterns of usage of those landing sites, times and days of fishing, types of fishing gears used, who do they sell to, and how Fisheries Officers gather data. During this activities, 120 interviews with fishers were conducted in four landing sites



### **3.0 ONGOING ACTIVITY**

I) Collection of the catch and biological information of Kampango such as number of individuals, the total catch, size of individual fish, weight per individual, sex and age structures from fishers catch at four landing sites which are Linda (Mandela), Mhalo, Mkwakwa and Chinula landing sites.

II) Preparation of poultry cages for chicken raising.

III) Monitoring of beekeeping activities

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The project has made significant progress toward strengthening the conservation of the critically endangered kampango (*Bagrus meridionalis*) in Lake Nyasa. Through the successful training of local data collectors, active engagement with fishing communities, and continuous monitoring of catch and biological information, the foundation has been laid for reliable population assessment and improved understanding of kampango status in the lake. Stakeholders' meetings and awareness activities have further enhanced community knowledge of sustainable fishing practices and introduced viable alternative livelihood options, including beekeeping and chicken raising, which aim to reduce pressure on kampango populations and their habitats.

The ongoing field monitoring efforts and the establishment of community livelihood groups demonstrate strong collaboration between the project team, local organizations, and community members. These collective actions are essential for fostering long-term stewardship of Lake Nyasa's biodiversity. As data collection continues and livelihood initiatives expand, the project is expected to generate critical information to guide species management while empowering local communities to participate actively in conservation.