

Participation of Local Communities in the Management of Wetlands in Magadi Area, Kenya

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Abstract:

Wetlands are lands that are transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water is usually at or near the surface of the land or land that is covered with shallow water (Cowardin et al. 1979, Roggeri 1995). In the context of dry lands, wetlands are areas that are permanently, seasonally or occasionally water logged with fresh or saline water that supports characteristic animals and plants. In the dry lands of eastern Africa, wetlands cover about 3 percent of the total land area and include shallow lakes and margins of deep lakes, swamps and marshes found on upper flood plains of major rivers, coastal river flood plains and high mountain peat bogs and tarns (Omoding 1995). These ecosystems support valuable biodiversity, including large numbers of mammals, reptiles, fishes and birds as well as diverse plant communities (Denny 1993). They also provide valuable resources and environmental benefits, such as biomass cropping for livestock pasture, water supply, agriculture, fisheries and subsistence hunting of wildlife that sustain local economies and communities (Shumway 1999).