

SDC 2019 Annual Meeting Abstracts

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Title: Sustainability of fisheries management at Lake Ngami, Botswana



Sustainability of the management social-ecological systems such as fisheries is an issue of major concern in Botswana, like in other parts of the world. When sustainably managed, fisheries can make a substantial contribution to economic growth, livelihoods, food security and improved nutrition of the local communities. This study focuses on small-scale inland fisheries at Lake Ngami in Botswana, where there is a gap in knowledge on the sustainability of the management of this resource system. Though inland fisheries make a significant contribution to sustainable development, they are overlooked in local, regional and global policies, including the Sustainable Development Goals which do not explicitly mention these fisheries. This study assesses the sustainability of the management fisheries at Lake Ngami in social, economic and environmental terms. The following research questions are utilised to make this assessment: 1) What are the challenges of the institutions for the management of the fisheries at Lake Ngami? 2) Are the fishing practices at Lake Ngami consistent with the FAO guidelines for responsible fishing, aimed at promoting sustainable fisheries? 3) How are the trends in the sustainability of the fisheries at Lake Ngami, Botswana? The results of this study are based on a review of fisheries policies, laws and regulations at Lake Ngami as well as fisheries surveys and data from continuous monitoring of Lake Ngami fisheries available at the Okavango Research Institute, University of Botswana. Preliminary results suggest that the management of fisheries at Lake Ngami is constrained by the lack of a fisheries policy which can guide the development of institutions for the sustainable management of this resource. The fish stocks are under-exploited; current fishing effort can be quadrupled without any danger of biological over-exploitation. The fishery at Lake Ngami is economically viable and plays a significant role in livelihoods promotion, especially for vulnerable groups such as female-headed households.