

Prospects and Potential of the African Lungfish (*Protopterus* spp): Results from a Field Survey in Uganda.

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Abstract

Culture of resilient species to drought and stressed water quality conditions may be a significant part of the future of African aquaculture. Air breathing fishes potentially have a role in low-management culture systems because dissolved oxygen is not a limiting factor. The African lungfish (*Protopterus* spp) is advantageous because it is an indigenous fish with good quality flesh, an air-breather and a biocontrol agent against schistosome vector snails. Little is known about indigenous practices of culture, harvest, and marketing of *Protopterus* spp from farm ponds and water bodies. This study assessed the status and potential of lungfish aquaculture in Uganda in seven districts in Kampala, Wakiso, Kumi, Busia, Soroti, Pallisa and Jinja. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders; fish farmers, fisher folk communities, Fisheries officers, scientists, fish traders, and consumers. Socio-economic conditions (prices, demand, and public perceptions) that shape the culture of African Lungfish were also assessed. African lungfish wild stocks in Uganda are continuously being reduced while no clear or sustainable mitigation measures/policies are being addressed to replenish the plummeted stocks. Lungfish is highly valued in major tribes of eastern of Uganda but gradually accepted in the central region. Majority of lungfish is consumed fresh but smoked products are also preferred. Its food and, medicinal, value is gradually substituting Tilapia and Nile perch markets, among the rural and densely populated communities. Cultural (traditional and religious) beliefs are main factors that continue to deter some consumers from eating Lungfish. However, preliminary findings in this