

EASTERN AFRICA

Co-ordinator

AFRIQUE ORIENTALE

Coordonnateur

*Mary J. BURGIS*INTRODUCTION

by Mary J. BURGIS

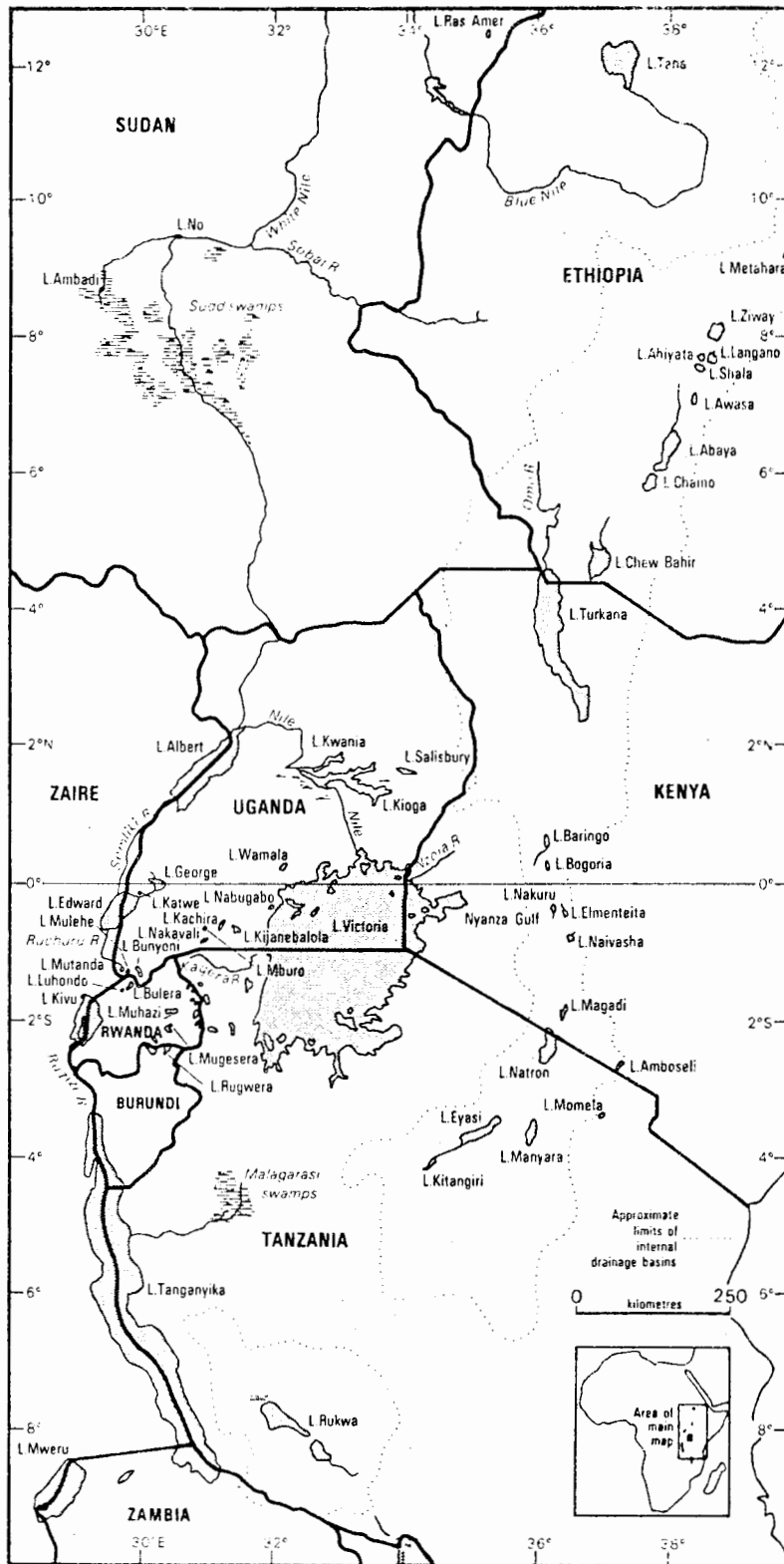
This region covers the whole of Ethiopia and the Republic of Djibouti, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi. Much of the area is at high altitude (c.1000 m asl) and in many places over 2000 m. It includes the head-water lakes of both the Blue Nile and the White Nile, plus some of the largest and deepest lakes in the world (Fig. 6.1). In addition there are many thousands of shallow lakes and wetlands which could have been included in this Directory. Only the most obvious and the best studied (not always the same) have been included. Many small crater lakes in the highlands adjacent to the Gregory Rift have been omitted as have quite large, but relatively unknown (from a limnological point of view), shallow pans such as Lake Amboseli and Lake Jipe. Many interesting high-mountain lakes have also been omitted. Perhaps more importantly (particularly from the point of view of those concerned with development projects), many major flood-plain areas have had to be omitted. In a paper presented at a workshop on "Dynamics of Continental Wetlands and Water Bodies" held in Minsk during July 1981, N.A. Mwanyika listed eleven major swamps in Tanzania and described the Lower Rufigi Floodplain the largest in Tanzania, to illustrate the importance of these areas to the local economy and their significance to large-scale development projects. The swamps on the Malagarasi River, which flow westward into Lake Tanganyika, are of particular zoological interest because some of their fish are more closely related to those of the Zaire River Basin than to the Nilotic fauna of East Africa. This suggests that an earlier westward course of the river was interrupted by the formation of the Rift Valley and Lake Tanganyika.

The lakes and wetlands dealt with here have been grouped into four geographical sub-regions, corresponding to those in which the bibliography is listed, and within them the best-known lakes are each treated separately and others are dealt with in groups.

A note on tilapia taxonomy:

Over the years the specific names of some of the commercially most important fish species in the lakes of Eastern Africa (the tilapias) have changed several times. In compiling this section of the Directory it was beyond the co-ordinator's competence to update the names of all these

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species accurately and it would have been very tedious for the user to have a row of synonyms provided every time, so the fish have been mostly referred to by the names used in the literature quoted. However, since the definitive work of Trevawas (1983) seems likely to finalise the names of at least some of these species a list of synonyms is given here to aid comparison between older and more recent literature. The name now proposed by Trevawas is given first:

Oreochromis alcalicus alcalicus = Sarotherodon alcalicus alcalicus  
= Tilapia alcalica

This is the sub-species endemic to Lake Natron.

Oreochromis alcalicus grahami = Sarotherodon alcalicus grahami  
= Tilapia grahami

This is the sub-species endemic to Lake Magadi and introduced to Lake Nakuru.

Oreochromis amphimelas = Tilapia manyarae

Oreochromis esculentus = Tilapia esculenta  
= Tilapia variabilis

Oreochromis jipe = Sarotherodon jipe  
= Tilapia jipe

Oreochromis leucostictus = Sarotherodon leucostictus  
= Tilapia leucosticta

Oreochromis mossambicus = Sarotherodon mossambicus  
= Tilapia mossambica

Oreochromis niloticus = Sarotherodon niloticus  
= Tilapia nilotica

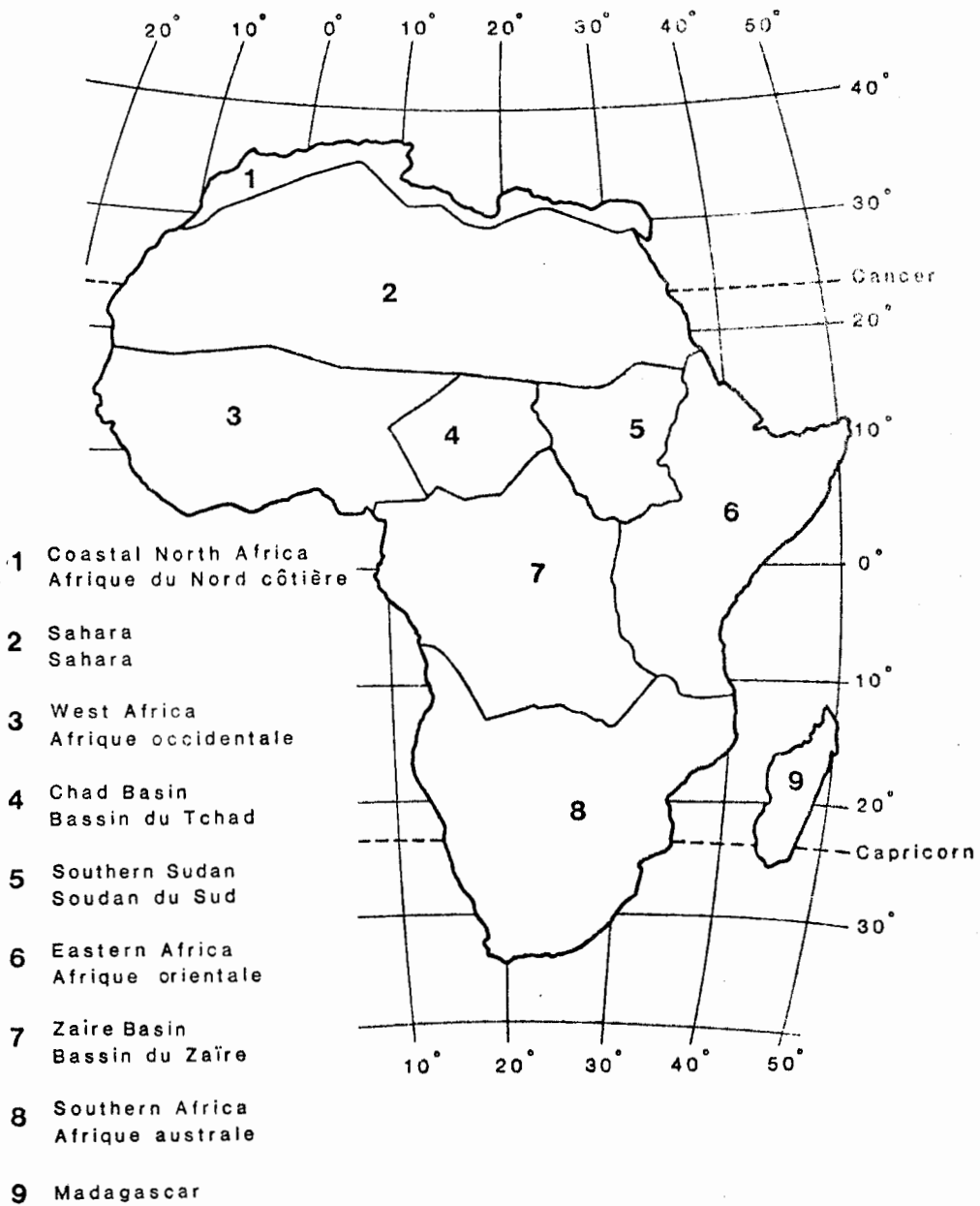
Oreochromis rukwaensis = Sarotherodon rukwaensis  
= Tilapia rukwaensis

Oreochromis spirulus niger = Oreochromis niger  
= Tilapia nigra

All members of the genus Oreochromis are mouth brooders. The genus Tilapia is now reserved for substrate brooders. It seems likely that the name tilapia will continue in general use for both these genera as the English vernacular.

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Fig. 6.1 Map showing the lakes of Eastern Africa, including most of those dealt with in this chapter. Only those in Eastern Ethiopia and Djibouti (see Fig.6.2) are omitted. International boundaries are shown by solid lines. (Redrawn after Talling & Talling 1965).



Regions of Africa treated in this Directory  
Régions d'Afrique traitées dans le présent répertoire

DIRECTORY  
REPERTOIRE



**African wetlands  
and shallow water bodies**

**Zones humides  
et lacs peu profonds  
d'Afrique**

M. J. BURGIS  
J. J. SYMOENS



**Éditions de l'ORSTOM**

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INSTITUT FRANÇAIS DE RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE POUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT EN COOPÉRATION

Collection **TRAVAUX et DOCUMENTS** n° 211

PARIS 1987

*This work was completed with financial assistance of :*  
Ce travail a pu être réalisé grâce au support financier de :

Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (South Africa)  
Fonds de la Recherche Fondamentale Collective (Belgique)  
Ministère de l'Environnement (France)  
Royal Society (Great Britain)  
IUCN and WWF



*Funds and facilities for the preparation of camera ready text were made available by IUCN and WWF*

L'IUCN et le WWF ont procuré les fonds et les facilités pour la préparation des manuscrits définitifs

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