

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS INFLUENCING HOUSEHOLD
WETLAND RESOURCES CONSERVATION AND USE IN NGACIUMA
SUB-CATCHMENT, UPPER TANA, KENYA.**

BY

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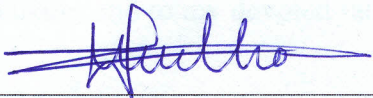
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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University or any other award

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ABSTRACT

Wetland ecosystems provide a wide range of goods and services that are important in supporting the livelihood of many rural communities. Despite their importance, over-exploitation and in the absence of conservation measures, wetlands continue to be degraded by human activities. Population growth pressure and subsequent food insecurity have led to the communities living near the wetland areas to reclaim the wetlands, thereby threatening the existence of the ecosystem. Factors responsible for wetland degradation in sub-catchments are many and varied. They include lack of understanding of the factors influencing people's access and decisions on use of wetland resources. There is minimal or no research conducted to understand the factors influencing rural household decisions on use of wetland resources in the sub-catchment. In order to understand and improve management of wetland this study sought to identify and analyse types of wetlands, assess the various households socio-economic factors influencing wetlands resources use and conservation methods used within the Ngaciuma sub-catchment. To achieve this, a combination of key informant interviews, transect walk, observations and household survey were used to collect data. A structured questionnaire was administered to 96 households to solicit data on the households' socio-economic characteristics and wetland use patterns. SWOT analysis was used to analyze the conservations methods and sources of threats to wetland resources. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select households for interview. The data generated was coded and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and analyzed using descriptive statistics and cross tabulation to describe various patterns influencing households' use of wetland resources. Correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between the household factors and use of wetland resources. Chi square was also used to compare the relationship between the expected and the observed wetland use. The results revealed that marshes are the most common type of wetlands which are dominated by *tyha* species vegetation. The findings also revealed that education, income levels, household size and proximity to wetlands influence the use of wetland resources at ($p < 0.05$) chi-square test. The most common methods used in conservation were planting of water friendly trees and soil conservation. Major challenges of wetland conservation include insufficient information and destruction of wetlands by wild animals. The study recommends formulation of comprehensive management plans, which have legal backing, to be used to govern the use of wetlands resources. There is also need for co-management of wetlands between the state and the communities.