

Aquatic Tourism Promotion In Nigerian Protected Areas: A Case Study Of Old Oyo National Park

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Nigeria is blessed with so many natural resources that can be harnessed for tourism development, both fauna and flora as well as landmarks that can serve as tourists' attraction are all over the country. All efforts at developing this sector have been focused on wildlife with less attention on the aquatic resources of tourist potential.

This study aimed at determining composition, abundance and distribution of some aquatic resources for sustainable ecotourism development and management.

The study was based on time (high and low water phases) and space stratification of Ogun River in the park. Fish sampling of the river was done with monofilament gillnets of 38mm to 127mm and graded hooks. Physico-chemical properties of the river also determined.

12 fish families and 30 species were identified, 5 families classified as fishes of ecotourism importance. Optimal fish catches achieved with mesh sizes 51mm and 76mm. highest species diversity found in upstream and decreased downward with Sex ratio 6.48 female: 3.52 male. Effect of seasons and mesh sizes were significant for total catches, however significant difference observed in number and weight of fishes among mesh sizes ($P < 0.05$). Significant correlation ($P < 0.05$) observed between length and weight of fishes during the seasons with r values of 0.774 and 0.894 and mean condition factor ranged from 0.55 to 2.34. Mean physico-chemical values are within tropical ranges. Socio-economic status of fisher folks was also determined.

Ogun River has high ecotourism potentials based on fishes identified and available infrastructures at the park.

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