

KENYA AQUATICA JOURNAL AT ARBEC II (2024) HELD IN KISUMU, KENYA

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The Kenya Aquatica Journal made a significant presence at the Second Aquatic Resources and Blue Economy Conference (ARBEC II), showcasing its progress and making a call for submission of manuscripts. Led by the Chief Editor Dr. Melckzedeck Osore, the team representing the Journal at the conference consisted of Ms. Josephine Marigu (Research Scientist, KMFRI), Mr. Michael S. Wanyonyi (Senior Librarian II, Alupe University), Ms. Asnath Nyachiro (ICT Officer, KMFRI), Mr. Gordon Arara (Graphic Designer) and Mr. Brian Isoe (Intern, KMFRI). The showcasing of the Kenya Aquatica Journal at ARBEC II was made possible through support from Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) and Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI).

EXHIBITION BOOTH

The Journal hosted an exhibition booth at the Conference, where the team displayed various editions of the Journal and interacted with participants presenting a comprehensive overview of the Kenya Aquatica's evolution since its inception in 2018. Featuring prominently at the booth was a video presentation outlining the journal's objectives, significant milestones, and future aspirations ([Link to Kenya Aquatica Video](#)). The video also included a call to action, encouraging researchers to submit their manuscripts to Kenya Aquatica, which provides an ideal platform for the dissemination of Kenya's aquatic research findings.

Key highlights of the Journal's exhibition booth included visits by the conference's chief guests H.E. Dr. Peter Anyang' Nyong'o and H.E. Dr. Mathew Ochieng Owili the Governor and Deputy Governor respectively of Kisumu County (Annex I). They were accompanied by top government officials and the KMFRI Board of Management. These high-profile visits provided the Aquatica team with a unique opportunity to showcase the Journal's significant impact on the Blue Economy. The team was able to demonstrate how the research findings disseminated through the Journal have contributed to informed decision-making and policy development in sustainable aquatic resource management and the Blue Economy sector.

LAUNCH OF THE LATEST EDITION OF THE JOURNAL - VOLUME 9 (1)

The conference provided a platform for the ceremonial launch of the Journal's latest edition, Volume 9(1) covering 8 peer reviewed papers on fish farming in Lake Victoria and bycatch in Lake Turkana, effect of alternative fish feed in aquaculture, stock status of an important fish species in

Kenya's coastal waters, impact of sedimentation on mangroves, application of remote sensing on watersheds and suitability of incentives on social research. During this event, Dr. Osore highlighted Aquatica's background, the progress it has made, and its vision for the future (Annex II). This presentation underscored the Journal's commitment to advancing aquatic research in Kenya and its role in the broader scientific community. The launch culminated in a ceremonial ribbon-cutting, symbolizing the official release of the new Volume. Dr. Osore then presented a copy of the latest edition to the acting Director General of KMFRI, Dr. James Mwaluma.

CONCLUSION

The Kenya Aquatica Journal's presence at ARBEC II not only showcased its achievements but also reinforced its position as a unique platform for disseminating aquatic research conducted in Kenya for the benefit of the Western Indian Ocean region at large. The team's engagement with potential authors, distinguished guests, and the ceremonial launch of the latest Volume 9(1) highlighted the journal's dynamic growth and its promising future, as well as its crucial role in informing science-based policy formulation and decision-making for a sustainable Blue Economy.

Annex I: Photos



Figure 1: Kisumu Governor (3rd from L), KMFRI Board Chair (2nd Left) and KMFRI Director General admire a copy of the current Vol 9 of Aquatica presented to them by Intern Mr. Brian Isoe at the Journal's booth



Figure 2: Ms Josephine Marigu (Left) at the Aquatica booth explains the Mission of the Journal to attentive high profile guests comprising (L to R) Kisumu County Commissioner Mrs. Pauline Dolla, KMFRI Director General Prof. James Njiru, Kisumu Deputy Governor, Dr. Mathew Owili accompanied by members of KMFRI Board Members.



Figure 3: Kenya Aquatica Journal team welcome Dr. Arthur Tuda (R) the Executive Secretary of WIOMSA at the booth. Others are Dr. Peter Odote (previous Editorial Member), Mr. Gordon Arara (Designer), Ms Josephine Marigu (Editorial Member) and Dr. Melckzedeck Osore (Chief Editor)

Annex II: Talking points for the Chief Editor at the ARBEC II in Kisumu, during the launch of the latest volume of the Kenya Aquatica Journal

INTRODUCTION

- Kenya Aquatica relation with the Blue Economy is historical because the journal was launched during the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference in November 2018
- Kenya Aquatica is a peer-reviewed, open access scientific journal hosted by the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI), with all editions accessible via the KMFRI website
- 7 volumes published to date, disseminating research findings through a total of 95 papers and posters, collectively authored by more than 100 researchers representing approximately 25 institutions.
- The latest is Volume 9, Issue 1, published in June, 2024

GROWTH AND EVOLUTION OF THE JOURNAL

- Over the years, the journal has covered a diverse range of research themes including fisheries, aquatic pollution, mariculture, aquatic value chains, oceanography, mangroves, seagrass, integrated coastal zone management, impacts of Covid-19 on the BE, climate-smart post-harvest technologies, socio-economics, nutrients, climate change, Blue Economy, aquaculture, remote sensing, and artisanal fishing
- The journal also produces special editions, such as conference proceedings, to provide a platform for disseminating research presented at events related to Aquatic research.
- The diversity of the editorial team has also improved over the years, with editors drawn from Pwani University, Technical University of Mombasa, Alupe University, KMFRI - Mombasa, and KMFRI – Kisumu. This showcases the Journal's commitment to collaboration with partners and inclusivity.
- The journal is working on indexing to increase its reach to a broader audience, while growing its impact factor in the scientific community.

THE AQUATICA JOURNAL HAS UNDERGONE A TREMENDOUS TRANSFORMATION BY MR. WANYONYI

- The Journal is the only one of its kind in the East African Coastline among WIOMSA member states covering aquatic issues in various fronts encompassing the waterbodies that include Kenya's region of the Indian Ocean, lakes, rivers and dams including aquatic ecosystems such as aquaculture.
- The Journal has enhanced the visibility and credibility of our scholarly and research outputs by conveying research findings, latest discoveries and future research prospects to the public. These articles are peer reviewed and approved by experts in the field and are therefore reliable resources that can be referred to by researchers, policy makers and the general public.
- The Journal offers a wide collection of scholarly articles that can be used for understanding the progress of knowledge in aquatic research field and for developing ideas for further research.
- This journal further enables communication between scholars, forming the basis for the development of further ideas, and track emerging ideas in the field of aquatic science.
- The journal in its quest of becoming a leading journal in Aquatic Sciences is engaging other players e.g. WIOMSA, AJOL, Crossref etc. in enhancing its research output through

provisions of Digital Object Identifiers, Journal indexing platforms to increase outreach and visibility for not only our research output but Data archiving purposes for future reference purposes

CALL TO ACTION

- Conference attendees are invited to submit manuscripts to the Kenya Aquatica Journal. ARBEC II brought together 535 participants representing 38 institutions presenting findings on aquatic research undertaken in several countries including Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Burundi, Nigeria, DRC, Liberia, Netherlands and Norway; among others.
- The conference organizing committee may also consider publishing the conference proceedings in the journal, to increase visibility and impact of their research. 115 oral presentations, 150 poster presentations, 9 key note speeches and 15 exhibitions were featured based on the 6 key themes of the conference, *viz.*, Blue Economy Policies and Governance, Community Engagement and Inclusivity, Marine Biology and Ecology, Oceanography and Climate Change, Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture & Technology and Innovations in the Blue Economy

CONCLUSION

- Express gratitude to KMFRI, WIOMSA, authors, editors, reviewers and ARBEC II Committee who have contributed to popularization of Kenya Aquatica.
- Emphasize the journal's commitment to publishing high-quality research in aquatic sciences and its role in advancing the Blue Economy agenda in Kenya and beyond.