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# *Hippopotamus amphibius* Linnaeus 1758 at Ruzizi River and Lake Tanganyika (Territory of Uvira, South Kivu, DR Congo): population census and conservation implications

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## ABSTRACT

*Description of the subject:* The study took place along the Ruzizi River between Kamayola and its mouth in Lake Tanganyika in the coast of Uvira.

*Objectives:* The aim was to assess abundance and distribution of hippo populations and propose community management to warrant the conservation of the species in these fragmented ecosystems.

*Methodology and Results:* The methods consisted of sampling on line transects using direct and indirect observations, associated with socio-economic surveys on the cohabitation between the local population and the Hippos. A total of 412 faeces, 123 footprints, 129 tracks and 145 Hippopotamus individuals were observed during two study missions. The average encounter rate per km of signs of hippopotamus activity and the population was higher in the Nyangara & Kahorohoro wetlands. Following the damage caused by the hippopotamuses, two site, Luvungi and Katogota were the most affected, while the human lives lost were more in the city of Uvira. The socio-economic survey of the local population showed that agriculture was the first economic activity.

*Conclusion and application of results:* In order to reduce conflict between men and hippopotamus, some strategies were developed and proposed for the long-term conservation of this aquatic pachyderm.

**Keywords:** Abundance, Spatial distribution, Conservation, habitat management, Hippopotamus.