

ABSTRACT

The area around Lake Nakuru was gazetted in 1968 and has since become one of Kenya's most popular national parks, mainly because of easy access and abundant wildlife. Owing to the ecological uniqueness of this shallow alkaline lake, which harbors up to 1.5 million flamingos and over 450 other bird species, the national park was also listed in 1990 as a wetland of global importance. Lake Nakuru National Park is under increasing pressure from Nakuru town: The last rows of houses in some of the town's informal settlements are literally leaning against the electrified fence surrounding the park. Poor management of solid waste and lack of control of industrial pollution pose a serious ecological threat, as does illegal sand harvesting along the Njoro River, which, together with the dramatic deforestation taking place in the Mau Escarpment, contributes substantially to accelerated siltation of the lake.

While Lake Nakuru National Park is exclusively used for wildlife conservation, the surrounding land area is intensively used for agriculture, forestry and ranching, creating a scenario in which most of the wildlife keeps destroying peoples' crops and other properties since they live just adjacent to the park. The existing relationship calls for the evaluation of attitudes and perception towards tourism development and wildlife conservation.