

Way forward. NARO has started training and helping farmers to establish fish farms.

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Govt moves to boost fish stock in face of extinction

WEST NILE. Many families in West Nile depend on various fish species for their health diets, as a source of income and for food security.

Food and Agricultural Organization recommends that everyone eats at least 17 kilogrammes of fish per year because of its rich nutrition value.

However, there is growing concern that some fish species are getting extinct from lakes and rivers that surround the region due to overfishing and trapping of immature fish.

Last month, Pakwach District leaders expressed concern over the declining population of Alestes Baremose fish species, commonly known as "Angara".

In a bid to find solutions to the growing problem, the National Agricultural Research Centre (NARO) at Abi Zardi in Arua, is helping farmers to establish fish ponds and training them to adopt best fish farming practices.

Recently, more than 30 farmers acquired skills and training in setting up fish ponds. The farmers were also trained on how to manage the fish ponds, selecting and breeding good quality fish, and marketing their products.

Over-fishing
Over-fishing in the lakes and rivers of poor fishing gears has led to the decline of fish stocks which has encouraged a sharp increase in the prices of fish especially Angara which is a delicacy in West Nile.

The Angara fish costs about Shs30,000 up from Shs25,000 last month. Mr Joseph Okwai, who has been fishing on Albert for the last 15 years, said Angara fish stocks have declined tremendously.

He revealed that he catches between three and 10 Angara daily unlike in the past when he would catch more than 10 and sometimes he had to go with nothing at all af-



Good catch. Fish farmers display some of the catfish they harvested from a pond in Nebbi District at the weekend. PHOTO BY PATRICK OKABA

ter spending a whole night in the lake.

The NARO specialist at Abi Zardi, Mr Nasser Kasozi, during the training last week, said: "There is need for farmers to identify high quality feeds for the fish in the ponds and this will make them multiply faster

THE DECLINE

According to Mr Kitamariki, 68 fish ponds totalling to about 17,014 square metres were hit by the drought after being restocked. This, he said, affected the production with a reduction of about 3.8 tons last financial year.

In 2015/16, the region produced about 11.2 tons of fish.

Statistics indicate that this year, tilapia fish accounted for about 1.3 tonnes while cat fish accounted for about 2.5 tons.

within 8-12 months."

He also advised farmers to check on the level of proteins in the feeds and monitor the temperature of the water as well as cut grass around the pond to avoid predators such as snakes. In an effort to protect and multiply the various fish species, NARO has demarcated part of River Nile for Cage Farming, and also started training some farmers on keeping Angara in fish ponds.

Production

As an alternative to conventional fish feeds, the farmers have been advised to plant soya beans and maize.

The fisheries department has also embarked on enhancing production of fish fingerlings in local hatcheries, a move intended to overturn the recent decline in local fish pro-

duction. The Arua fisheries officer in charge of Aqua-culture, Mr Joseph Kitamariki, recently said the district was last month hit by drastic drop in local fish production despite fish farming being instrumental in supplementing fish supply.

FISH SPECIES

The most common types of fish in Uganda include Nile Perch, locally known as "Empuuta", Singidia tilapia referred to as "Engege" Nile tilapia, Catfish, Silver fish, Lungfish, Eels and Sprat. Baremose fish, popularly known as "Angara", is common in parts of West Nile region.

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Woman held over theft

KOBOKO. Police in Koboko District are holding a woman over alleged theft of a child. The 28-year-old suspect, a resident of Arumaji cell, North Division in Koboko Municipality was last Friday arrested after being found with a baby who went missing on February 4. The three-month-old baby girl was reportedly stolen...

Four to appear in court

KOBOKO. At least four students from St Charles Lwanga College Koboko and Koboko Town College are expected to appear at Koboko Magistrate Court on allegations of malicious damage of property. According to the district police commander, Mr Brian Ampaire, three students of St Charles Lwanga College...

Court issues injunction

GULU. Gulu High Court has issued a temporary injunction restraining Gulu University electoral commission from swearing in the newly elected guild president, Mr Daniel Mbazira. This follows a petition in court by James Ojok Onono, a second year Public Administration student, challenging results...