

BY DAN WANDERA

NAKASONGOLA. Concern is growing among fishing communities on Lake Kyoga as expanding masses of floating vegetation, a mixture of papyrus and water hyacinth, continue to disrupt fishing activities and destroy equipment.

Fishermen say the vegetation has interfered with their work, with more than 50 fishing nets reportedly lost in a single day at Lwampanga Fish Landing Site in Nakasongola District.

Mr Gideon Atiku, a fisherman at Lwampanga Landing Site who has lost more than 15 fishing nets since January, said the situation has been worsened by strong winds that push the vegetation across the lake at high speed, endangering fishermen and their gear.

"When we cast our nets at night, we later find them missing after getting swept away by the floating vegetation.

Floating vegetation swallows fishing nets on L Kyoga

We have to keep dodging the vegetation as we try to search for the missing nets, with little success. I have lost more than 15 nets, trapped and destroyed by the floating vegetation," he said on Tuesday.

Mr Dan Bukenya, the Nakasongola District councillor representing Lwampanga Town Council, said fishermen's losses have intensified as the vegetation masses drift from different directions of the lake, sometimes forcing them to suspend their daily activities.

"Many fishing nets are lost as the mass, composed of papyrus and water hyacinth, moves through sections of Lake Kyoga. We have contacted the concerned government officials through the Nakasongola District Local Government, but we are yet to receive a meaningful intervention," he said.

At Kibuye Fish Landing Site in

Lwampanga Sub-county, the fishing community has reportedly lost more than 200 fishing nets since December 2025.

Mr Solomon Okecho, a fisherman and member of the Beach Management Committee at Kibuye Landing Site, said the losses have been devastating for many fishermen.

"We are waiting for a major intervention from the government as promised through the Nakasongola District leaders," he said.

Officials at Nakasongola District Local Government say they have already notified the relevant government departments, including the Ministry of

Water and Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, about the expanding floating vegetation on Lake Kyoga.

Mr Sam Kigula, the Nakasongola District chairperson, said the vegetation is not a new phenomenon on the lake but has grown significantly over the past three years.

"We have held discussions with the relevant government departments about the dangers of the floating vegetation that is multiplying on Lake Kyoga. We have also raised the issue under the Lake Kyoga Integrated Management Organisation, which brings together more than 15 districts that share the lake. We are now awaiting a major government in-

tervention," he said.

The floating vegetation on Lake Kyoga, mainly a mixture of papyrus and water hyacinth, moves across the lake with the wind. Fishermen say it blocks smooth fishing operations and poses risks to those working on the water.

They also fear that the vegetation could soon harbour crocodiles, which are believed to breed and live within the floating masses.

In 2025, a delegation from the Egyptian government visited Uganda to explore a partnership aimed at introducing technology that converts water hyacinth into usable energy and other by-products. However, officials from the Lake Kyoga Integrated Management Organisation (LAKIMO) say the project is yet to take shape as stakeholders continue to await concrete action

200
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