

**THE GREAT RUAHA RIVER (GRR)-
AN IMPORTANT WATERSHED AREA IN RUAHA
NATIONAL PARK AND THE ENTIRE ECOSYSTEM.**

1:Introduction:

- Ruaha National Park (R.N.P) is the second largest park in Tanzania (after Serengeti), covering an area of approximately 10,300 square kilometres.
- Climate- annual rainfall is 500mm per annum with prolonged period of dry season (up to six months).
- The park is managed under the parastatal trusteeship, Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA) under the ministry of natural resources and tourism, enacted by an act of parliament under law of the land Chapter 412 of 1959.
- TANAPA is currently managing twelve (12) National Parks, which form the major samples of different biomes and ecological systems in the country, the twelve (12) National Parks cover 4% of the total land area of the country- (954,000 square kilometers).
- The main feature of Ruaha National Park is the Great Ruaha River (GRR). The Great Ruaha river begins in Usangu swamps in Mbeya region, where the catchments forest of the river originates.
- The life of the highly diversified and varieties of the biological resources in Ruaha National Park depends greatly on the Great Ruaha River. The river is the main source of water for the wildlife and people especially during the dry season, a period when most of

Introduction cont....

the water pools present in the park dry out.

- Since 1993 to date, the Great Ruaha River (GRR) has been drying continually and for prolonged periods every other year.
- Between the months of August, September and November up to late December (before on-set of rains) is the crucial time, the 'comeback time' is dependent on the commencement of the rains.

2: Significance of the GRR

- Provision of water for the wildlife, ecosystem and the environment- Ruaha National Park- (tourism industry).
- Fishing activity- both upstream and downstream.
- Agricultural activities upstream-dry season paddy farming- both parastatal & traditional smallholders.
- Hydroelectric power supply –more than 76% to the national scale.
- Supports livelihood of people upstream and downstream-water for domestic purposes.
- Provision of water for domesticated animals upstream.

- **3: Effects of drying up of the GRR**

- Wildlife affected in Ruaha National Park- the aquatic animals, terrestrial animals- change in behaviors and their responses to changes.
- Effect on the natural functioning of the ecosystems in Ruaha National and the ecosystem- ecological, biological and physical functioning of the entire ecosystem and the environment in general.
- Hydropower production affected due to reduced flow of the river in dry season.
- Wetland affected upstream (Usangu wetland as categorized internationally).

- **4: Challenges to restore flow of the GRR**

- Social economic issues
- Water availability for various uses- chances for ensuring water flows for the downstream users- minimal.
- Inefficient water use/misuse of water supplies especially at the catchment forest upstream- consider the agriculture practices upstream.
- Institutional issues
- Sectoral conflicting interests and policies- due to lack of cross sectoral and policy co-ordination.
- Stakeholders participation in river basin management
- Inadequate mechanism for integrated water resources planning and decision making support system.

5: Conclusion:

- Water as a scarcity resource is essential for sustaining life and the ecosystems around us.
 - Water resource, a vital component of the environment has faced great pressures and demands on its use, its sustainability is threatened by various human induced activities that we need to pay more attention to its proper management.
- Together with the presentation: video tape show of the Great Ruaha River (GRR).

Thank you,

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