



# GET THE FACTS: AFRICAN GREAT LAKES

## AFRICAN GREAT LAKES (AGL)

The African Great Lakes (AGL) span seven major lake basins and cover an area of over 850,000 km<sup>2</sup>. Combined, they underpin the welfare and livelihoods of over 50 million people across 10 countries. Together, they account for nearly 25% of the world's surface freshwater.

## WHAT ARE THE AFRICAN GREAT LAKES?

The AGL consist of Lake Albert, Lake Edward, Lake Kivu, Lake Malawi/Niassa/Nyasa, Lake Tanganyika, Lake Turkana, and Lake Victoria. These lakes are centered around the East African Rift and border 10 countries throughout eastern Africa. The lakes are considered a 'biodiversity hotspot' and are known for their plentiful fisheries with 1,800 different species.



### Lake Albert

Lake Albert is shallow with a maximum depth of 190 feet (60m).



### Lake Edward

Lake Edward is the smallest of the African Great Lakes.



### Lake Kivu

Lake Kivu has one of the highest population densities and growth rates in the AGL region. It has a rugged coast and contains many islands.



### Lake Malawi, Niassa/Nyasa

This lake is known by different names, by the different bordering countries. It has more fish species than any other lake.



### Lake Tanganyika

Lake Tanganyika is the longest and second oldest freshwater lake in the world.



### Lake Turkana

Lake Turkana is the largest permanent desert lake. It is a saltwater lake which makes it unsuitable for drinking and irrigation.



### Lake Victoria

Lake Victoria is the largest body of freshwater in Africa and second largest in the world, by surface area. Lake Baikal in Russia is the only lake larger by area. Lake Victoria is very large, but very shallow, with a maximum depth of 272 feet.





East Africa is home to some of the largest and deepest lakes in the world. Many of them mark the borders between countries, leading to conflicts over sovereignty and natural resources.

Image Source: [africa.wisc.edu/the-great-lakes-to-great-lakes-initiative-mutual-interests-in-africa/](http://africa.wisc.edu/the-great-lakes-to-great-lakes-initiative-mutual-interests-in-africa/)



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## THREATS TO THE GREAT LAKES

**Climate change and climate migration impact the African Great Lakes more and more each year. The increase of air and water temperatures causes water in the Great Lakes to evaporate and become displaced. Having lower water levels causes the lakes to be more susceptible to damage from pollution, invasive species, and more. As people relocate due to climate-related troubles, the population density around these resources adds to increased pressure on fish stocks in the lakes. Invasive species, such as water hyacinth and Nile perch, have led to loss of native species. Threats from plastic pollution are also a concern. Please see our Fact Sheet on Single Use Plastics.**

### SOURCES:

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