

Volume 13

Number 1

JUNE 2011



IFE JOURNAL OF SCIENCE

A Journal of the Faculty of Science
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

ISSN 0794-4896

Ife Journal of Science

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CHECKLIST OF THE AQUATIC MACROPHYTES OF JEBBA LAKE, NIGERIA

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(Received: October, 2010; Accepted: May, 2011)

ABSTRACT

The occurrence and diversity of aquatic macrophytes on Jebba Lake were documented during the rainy and dry seasons from 1999 to 2001. Analyses showed that the species diversity increased by 20, from 26 in 1988 to 46 in 2001. The number of species encountered during the dry and wet seasons during the period of sampling between 1999 and 2001 differed only marginally. The emergent macrophytes formed 93.3% of the total macrophyte population with the dominant species irrespective of season being *Vossia cuspidata* Griff., *Eichhornia crassipes* (Mart.) Solms, *Mimosa pigra* Linn, *Vetiveira nigriflora* (Benth.) Stapf, and *Mariscus longibracteatus* Cherm., *Sesbania dalzielii*. E. Philip & Hutch. which is an annual, was found to be dominant only during the rainy period.

Key words: Aquatic Macrophytes, Diversity, Abundance, *Vossia cuspidata*, *Eichhornia crassipes*, *Sesbania dalzielii*.

INTRODUCTION

Aquatic plant infestation of water bodies is a worldwide problem. Many aquatic plants grow as weeds in paddy crops, drainage systems and waterways (Akobundu, 1987). Weeds of paddy crops (Akobundu, 1987) and aquatic macrophytes occurring in Lake Kainji, Nigeria (Obot and Ayeni 1987) have been reported. Massive occurrence of water hyacinth on Lake Kainji (Akinyemiju, 1995), Itoikin irrigation channel, Lagos state (Akinyemiju, 1989) and Kofawei creek, Ondo State (Akinyemiju and Imevbore, 1990) have also been reported. Jebba Lake, impounded in 1983 for hydroelectric power generation and flood control in Nigeria (Anonymous, 1983) is currently threatened by aquatic macrophytic infestation.

Water hyacinth invasion of water body is a biological stressor which endanger other aquatic flora and fauna (Akinyemiju, 1987; Olaleye and Akinyemiju, 1999) and impair physico-chemical quality of water bodies (Olaleye, 2002). A market survey around fishing communities in Nigeria revealed a sharp decline in the tonnage of fishes of economic importance in aquatic vegetation infested areas (Alimi and Akinyemiju, 1991). This study was carried out to document the changes in the aquatic macrophytic composition of Jebba Lake which is one of the biggest artificial lakes in Nigeria.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Area.

The study was carried out on Jebba Lake, which lies between 9° 10' and 9° 55'N and 4° 30' and 4° 50'E. The Lake, which was impounded in 1983, has a drainage basin extending 100 km from Fakun, immediately below Kainji Reservoir, to the Jebba dam site. The hydrological pattern of Jebba Lake, which is closely linked with that of the Kainji Lake, experiences two annual floods. Between June and July at the onset of the annual rainy season, water drawn from rivers and streams within the catchment area is discharged into the Lake (Obot and Mbagwu, 1988). The second flood originates from areas around the source of River Niger in Guinea, comes in as black flood into Kainji Lake and subsequently enters Jebba lake as excess discharges from the lake (Obot, 1984). The black flood which reaches Kainji Lake in early November finds its way into the Jebba Lake by the end of November or early December. Six major tributaries which empty into Jebba Lake: the Oli, Wuruma, Moshi and Awuru Rivers on the western side and the Kontangora and Eku Rivers on the Eastern side (Figure 1).

Methods

An initial field reconnaissance survey was carried out along both banks of Jebba Lake between June and July 1999. Sampling was done at approximately 3 km interval such that 68

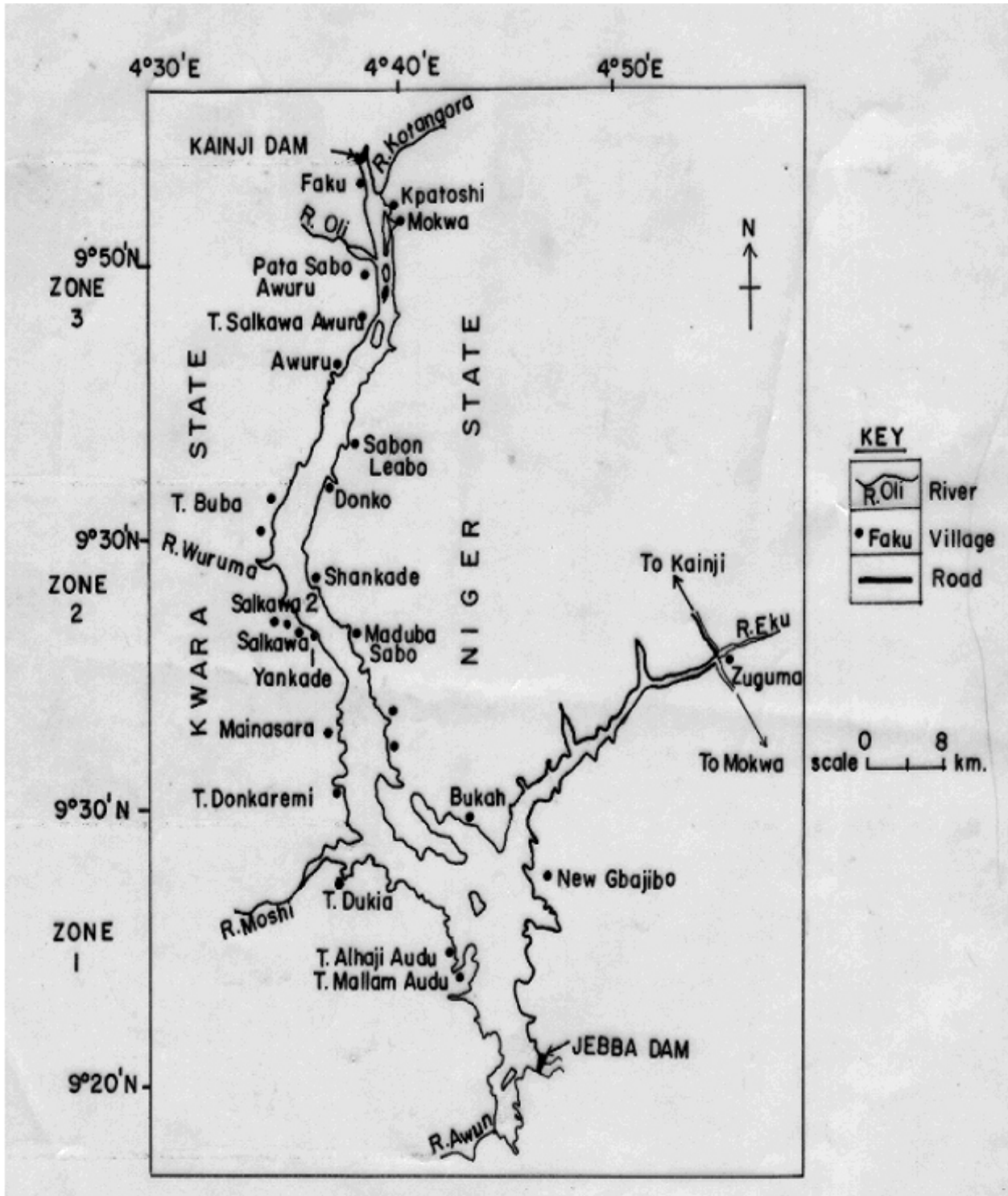


Figure 1: Map of Jebba, Lake Nigeria

(Source: National Institute for Freshwater Fisheries Research, New Bussa, Niger State, Nigeria)

designated stations were sampled along the shoreline and the open water. Based on the preliminary results, a systematic-sampling technique was then adopted to map out sampling points on the lake during the field survey between August 1999 and August 2001. With the aid of line transects, 20 sampling points were then established at 10 km intervals with the aid of a GPS, on the eastern and western sides of the lake (Figure 1). Sampling was carried out over two years (1999-2001) during the rainy season, which corresponds to the period of drawdown or lower water regime over the lake, and during the dry season, which corresponded to the high water regime (when the lake holds the highest volume of water).

A 5 x 5 m sampling plot which was established at each location, extends from the open water (with a depth of 5-10 m) up to the shoreline. Across each sampling plot, a perpendicular line transect was laid. A 1 m² quadrat was then laid at 1 m interval to facilitate a complete littoral and open water plant species data collection. Herbaceous and woody species within each transect were also identified to species level according to Hutchinson and Dalziel (1954-1972). The encountered plant species composition was then compared with earlier documented aquatic plant species composition on the Jebba Lake (Obot and Mbagwu, 1986; 1988).

RESULTS

A total of 46 plant species belonging to 22 families were recorded (Table 1) during the period of study. The floristic composition consist of 21 perennial plants species, 18 annual species while only three species were either annual or perennial, depending on the prevailing environmental conditions. A total of 45 aquatic species were observed during the rainy season, while 47 species were observed during the dry period (Table 1). On the basis of life forms, macrophytic species accounted for about 4.4% of the total species composition, submerged aquatic species accounted for 2.2% while emergent species with 93.30% of the total number of species encountered across the seasons. *Ludwigia hysopifolia* was encountered only during the dry season.

Comparison of the aquatic macrophytic species found on the Jebba Lake during the 1986, 1988 and 2001 samplings is shown in Table 2. The occurrence of the macrophytic species during the

rainy season is shown in Figure 2. The result showed that the dominant species during the rainy season include *Vossia cuspidata*, *Sesbania dalzielii*, *Eichhornia crassipes* and *Mimosa pigra* with 10.7%, 10.3%, 8.7%, and 8.2% occurrence respectively. Other less prominent species arranged in the descending order of occurrence were *Mariscus longibracteatus*, *Ipomoea aquatica*, *Vetiveria nigriflora* and *Polygonum lanigerium*. Comparatively, the following were prominent species during the dry period: *Vossia cuspidata*, *Eichhornia crassipes*, *Echinochloa* spp. and *Mimosa pigra* with 10.3%, 10.3%, 9.1% and 8.3% occurrence respectively. Analysis further showed that irrespective of the season of sampling, the dominant aquatic macrophytic species were *Vossia cuspidata*, *Eichhornia crassipes*, *Sesbania dalzielii*, *Mariscus longibracteatus*, *Echinochloa* spp., *Mimosa pigra*, *Polygonum lanigerium*, *Ipomoea* spp. and *Vetiveria nigriflora*. Comparative analysis also showed that the low number of macrophytes species on the Jebba Lake between 1986 and 1988 has increased from 18 species (in 1986) to 30 species (in 1988) and to 46 species between 1999 and 2001. Analysis also showed that twenty new species have established in the lake while sixteen species were no longer present in the lake 13 years after (Table 2).

DISCUSSION

Comparative studies showed that the macrophytic species composition of the Jebba Lake was similar to those of plants encountered on the Kainji Lake. This was probably because Kainji Lake supplies a lot of plant propagules to Jebba Lake (Obot and Mbagwu, 1988). However, factors responsible for the development of many of new species encountered on the Jebba Lake was probably reduction in the hydraulic water turnover in Jebba Lake which allows for extended water retention period, consequently allowing for new plant development.

The effect of human impacts in terms of non-fishing activities like crop farming and animal husbandry in the riparian communities indirectly enrich the lake through application of inorganic and organic fertilizers. Both Jebba and Kainji Lake catchment basins service several thousand livestock especially cattle, sheep and goats as grazing and water holes (Adesina et al., 2004). These animals through grazing of diverse vegetation deposit viable seeds in addition which end up in the nearest riparian waterbody and later germinate thereby adding to the species diversity

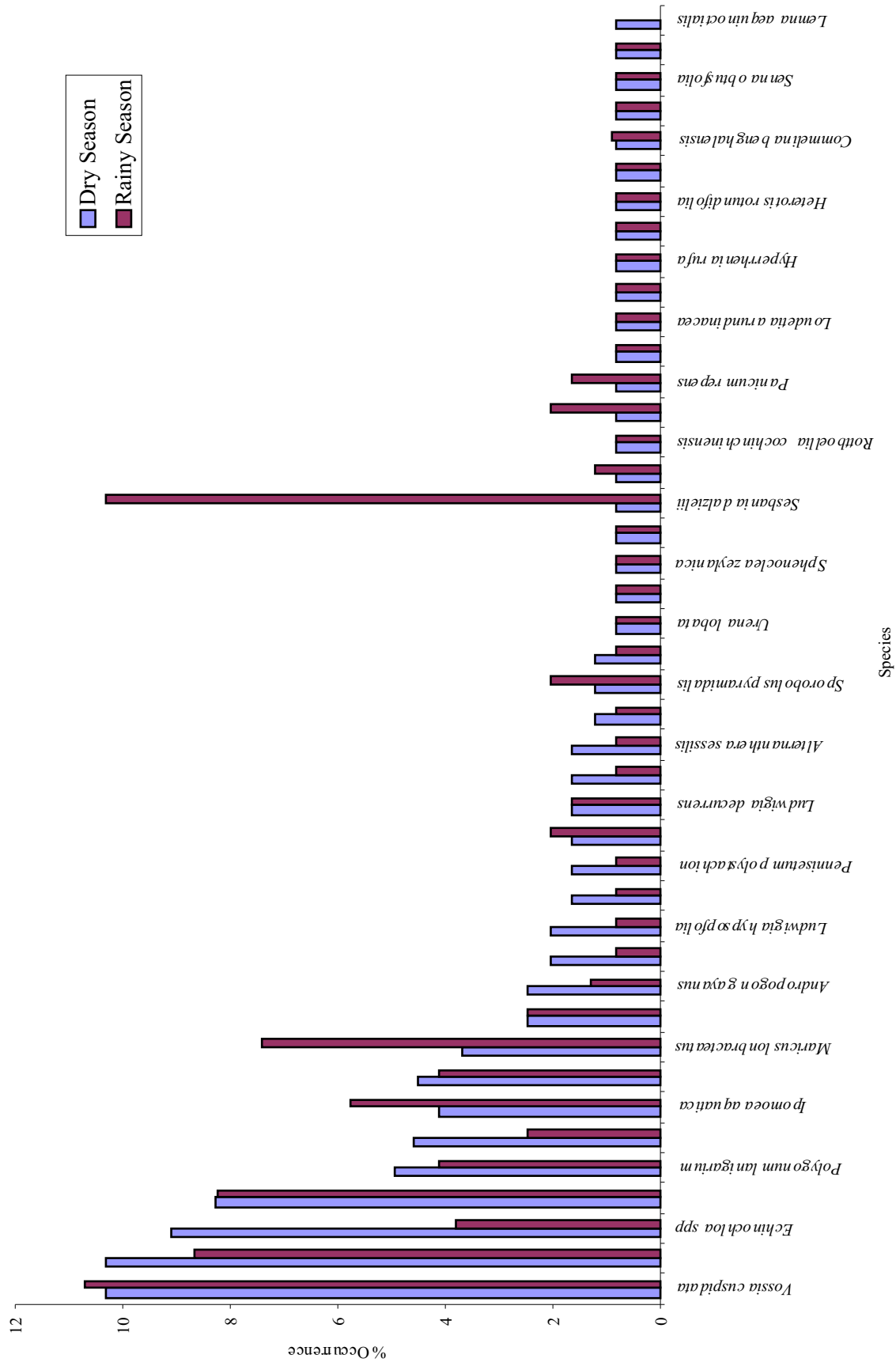


Figure 2: Percentage Occurrence of Aquatic Macrophyte Species on Jebba Lake During the Dry and Rainy Seasons between 1999 - 2001.

of vegetation within the lake catchment. Also, the two lakes (Kainji and Jebba) share some basic hydrological characteristics, which encourages the proliferation of floating aquatic macrophytes like water hyacinth. Such floating macrophytes arrive annually with floodwater from neighbouring countries and from different tributaries on Kainji Lake and are subsequently washed downstream into Jebba Lake during the annual flooding (Akinyemiju, 1995; Daddy *et al.*, 1999).

The increased diversity of identified aquatic macrophyte species on the lake which was season-dependent and with the highest diversity index of 3.8 during the dry period (Adesina *et al.*, 2007) was probably due to the flooding of the shoreline areas during the dry period leading to the increase in biodiversity. The Lake has its highest volume of water during the dry season when water from all its tributaries reaches the lake (Adesina *et al.*, 2007). This hydraulic phenomenon on Jebba Lake therefore probably created a conducive environment for emergent macrophytes on the littoral zone of the lake to thrive. During the rainy season, the dominant annual *Sesbania dalzielii* emerged during the period of the study. Other aquatic macrophytes that had their growth apparatus such as rhizomes buried in the soil or seeds dropped on soil surface probably emerged due to the favourable soil condition (Obot, 1984). The occurrence of the shrubs, *Mimosa pigra* irrespective of season of sampling on the bank/littoral area of the lake was probably because the seedlings developed throughout the year. Some upland plants species like *Andropogon gayanus* and *Sporobolus pyramidalis* were found growing on the littoral zones of the lake probably because majority of the annual macrophytic species identified were emergent (Adesina *et al.*, 2007), only dominant during the rainy season but as dry season approaches, it produces seed for regeneration into another season and withers off.

Eichhornia crassipes, which is listed in 1995 as one of the invasive, problematic aquatic plants (Cronk and Fuller, 1995) was found as one of the dominant macrophytes on the Lake, although it was not a prominent aquatic plant in 1988 (Obot and Mbagwu, 1988). Other prominent macrophytes recorded during the current study which were absent in the earlier reports were *V. nigritana*, *S. dalzielii* and *T. australis*. *Sesbania dalzielii*, which the riparian communities livestock farmers depend on as a forage plant (Obot, 1984; Adesina *et al.*, 2007) and whose growth is naturally tied to

rainy seasons, does not pose threat to the lake. However, the other newly recorded macrophytic species pose major threat to the lake existence. Adequate control or management techniques must therefore be put in place (Anonymous, 2001) to prevent their uncontrolled proliferation.

CONCLUSION

The result of this study indicated a dangerous trend in the rate at which invasive aquatic plants colonize the fresh water bodies in Nigeria with Jebba Lake as a case study. Nigerian water bodies are of high economic importance to the riparian populace and other stakeholders that depend on such water bodies for their economic activities. It is therefore essential to monitor and manage the influx of these exotic aquatic plants in the country. Most countries around the world that had Water Hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) and other aquatic plants bore heavy financial losses hence the need to stem such tide of aquatic weed infestation in Jebba Lake.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The senior author is grateful for the support of the management of the National Institute for Freshwater Fisheries Research, who funded this work, and also the technical staff of the Aquatic Vegetation Programme of the Institute for all their effort in the field to see the work to a successful completion.

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Table 1 : Aquatic Macrophyte Species Recorded on Jebba Lake from 1999 to 2001

Species	A/P ¹	Wet Season ²	Dry Season ³
Amaranthaceae			
<i>Alternanthera sessilis</i> (L.) R. Br. ex DC.	A	+	+
Asteraceae			
<i>Tridax procumbent</i> L.	A	+	+
Azollaceae			
<i>Azolla pinnata</i> subsp. <i>africana</i> (Desv.)		+	+
Caesalpinioideae			
<i>Chamaecrista mimosoides</i> (L.) Greene	A/P	+	+
<i>Senna obtusifolia</i> (L.) Irwin & Barneby	A/P	+	+
Ceratophyllaceae			
<i>Ceratophyllum demersum</i> L.	P	+	+
Cochlospermaceae			
<i>Cochlospermum planchonii</i> Hook. f.	P	+	+
Commelinaceae			
<i>Commelina benghalensis</i> L.	A/P	+	+
Convolvulaceae			
<i>Ipomoea asarifolia</i> (Desr.) Roem. & Schult	P	+	+
<i>Ipomoea aquatica</i> Forsk.	P	+	+
<i>Ipomoea eriocarpa</i> R. Br.	A	+	+
Cyperaceae			
<i>Mariscus longbracteatus</i> Cherm.		+	+
Fabaceae			
<i>Indigofera hirsuta</i> L.	A	+	+
<i>Mimosa pigra</i> L.	P	+	+
<i>Mucuna spp</i>	A	+	+
Lemnaceae			
<i>Lemna aequinoctialis</i> Welwitsch		-	+
Malvaceae			
<i>Urena lobata</i> L.	P	+	+
Melastomataceae			
<i>Heterotis rotundifolia</i> (Sm.) Jacq-Fel	P	+	+
Nymphaeaceae			
<i>Nymphaea lotus</i> L.	P	+	+
Onagraceae			
<i>Ludwigia decurrens</i> Walt. Syn.	A	+	+
<i>Ludwigia hyssopifolia</i> (G. Don) Excell		-	+
Papilionoideae			
<i>Tephrosia bracteolata</i> Guill. & Perr.	A	+	+
<i>Sesbania dalzielii</i> . E. Philip & Hutch	A	+	+

Poaceae

<i>Andropogon gayanus</i> Kunth.	P	+	+
<i>Digitaria longiflora</i> (Retz.) Pers.	A	+	+
<i>Echinochloa obtusiflora</i> Stapf	P	+	+
<i>Echinochloa pyramidalis</i> (L.) Hitchc. & Chase	P	+	+
<i>Echinochloa colona</i> (L.) Link.	P	+	+
<i>Echinochloa stagnina</i> Retz. P. Beauv.	P	+	+
<i>Hyperhemia rufa</i> (Nees.) Stapf.	A	+	+
<i>Leersia hexandra</i> Swartz	P	+	+
<i>Loudetia arundinacea</i> (A. Rich.) Steud.	P	+	+
<i>Panicum repens</i> L.	P	+	+
<i>Paspalum scrobiculatum</i> L.	P	+	+
<i>Pennisetum polystachion</i> (L.) Schult.	A	+	+
<i>Phragmites karka</i> (Retz.) Steud.	P	+	+
<i>Rottboellia cochinchinensis</i> (Lour.) W.D. Clayton.	A	+	+
<i>Schizachyrium sanguineum</i> (Retz.) Alston	P	+	+
<i>Setaria pumila</i> (Poir) Roem & Schult	A	+	+
<i>Sporobolus pyramidalis</i> P. Beauv.	P	+	+
<i>Vossia cuspidate</i> Griff.	P	+	+
<i>Vetiveria nigriflora</i> (Benth.) Stapf	P	+	+

Polygonaceae

<i>Polygonum lanigerum</i> R.Br.	P	+	+
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Pontederiaceae

<i>Eichhornia crassipes</i> (Mart.) Solms	P	+	+
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Rubiaceae

<i>Borreria octodon</i> Hepper	A	+	+
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Sphenocleaceae

<i>Sphenoclea zeylanica</i> Gaertn.	A	+	+
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Typhaceae

<i>Typha australis</i> Schum & Thorn	P	+	+
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1=A Annual; P- Perennial;

2= Wet season is between May and September

3= Dry season is between October and April

Plus(+)=Present and Minus(-)= Absent

Table 2: Comparison of Macrophyte Species Composition in Jebba Lake in 1986, 1988 and 1999-2001

Species	Obot and Mbagwu	Obot and Mbagwu	Current Study
	1986	1988	1999 2001
Adiantaceae			
<i>Ceratopteris cornuta</i> (Beauv.) Le Prieur	X	X	-
Amaranthaceae			
<i>Alternanthera nodiflora</i> (L.) R. Br.	-	X	-
<i>Alternanthera sessilis</i> (L.) R. Br. ex DC.	-	X	X
Araceae			
<i>Pistia stratiotes</i> L.	X	X	-
Asteraceae			
<i>Tridax procumbens</i> L.	-	-	X
<i>Eclipta prostrata</i> L.	-	X	-
Azollaceae			
<i>Azolla pinnata subsp. africana</i> (Desv.)	-	X	X
Boraginaceae			
<i>Heliotropium indicum</i> L.	-	X	-
Caesalpinioideae			
<i>Chamaecrista mimosoides</i> (L.) Greene	-	-	X
<i>Senna obtusifolia</i> (L.) Irwin & Barneby	-	-	X
Ceratophyllaceae			
<i>Ceratophyllum demersum</i> L.)	X	X	X
Cochlospermaceae			
<i>Cochlospermum planchonii</i> Hook. f.	-	-	X
Commelinaceae			
<i>Commelina benghalensis</i> L.	-	-	X
Convolvulaceae			
<i>Ipomoea asarifolia</i> (Desr.) Roem. & Schult	-	X	X
<i>Ipomoea aquatica</i> Forsk.	X	X	X
<i>Ipomoea eriocarpa</i> R. Br.	-	-	X
Cyperaceae			
<i>Cyperus dilatatus</i> Schumach & Thonn.	-	X	-
<i>Mariscus longibracteatus</i> Cherm.	-	-	X
<i>Scirpus cubensis</i> Poepping and Kunth	X	X	-
Fabaceae			
<i>Indigofera hirsuta</i> Linn.	-	-	X
<i>Mimosa pigra</i> Linn.	-	X	X
<i>Mucuna spp</i>	-	-	X
Lemnaceae			
<i>Lemna aequinoctialis</i> Welwitsch	X	X	X
Malvaceae			
<i>Urena lobata</i> L.	-	-	X
Melastomataceae			
<i>Heterotis rotundifolia</i> (Sm.) Jacq.-Fel	-	-	X
Nymphaeaceae			
<i>Nymphaea lotus</i> L.	X	X	X
Onagraceae			

<i>Ludwigia decurrens</i> Walt.	X	X	X
<i>Ludwigia erecta</i> (L.) H. Hara	X	-	-
<i>Ludwigia hyssopifolia</i> (G. Don) Excell	X	X	-
<i>Ludwigia leptocarpa</i> (Nutt.) H. Hara	X	X	-
<i>Ludwigia stolonifera</i> (Guil and Per.) Raven	X	X	-
<i>Ludwigia suffruticosa</i> Walter	-	-	X
Papilionoideae			
<i>Indigofera hirsuta</i> Linn.	-	-	X
<i>Tephrosia bracteolata</i> Guill. & Perr.	-	-	X
<i>Sesbania dalzielii</i> E. Philip & Hutch	-	-	X
Poaceae			
<i>Andropogon gayanus</i> Kunth.	-	-	X
<i>Digitaria longiflora</i> (Retz.) Pers.	-	-	X
<i>Echinochloa obtusiflora</i> Stapf	-	-	X
<i>Echinochloa pyramidalis</i> (L.) Hitchc. & Chase	-	X	X
<i>Echinochloa colona</i> (L.) Link.	-	X	X
<i>Echinochloa stagnina</i> Retz. P. Beauv.	X	-	X
<i>Hyperrhenia rufa</i> (Nees) Stapf.	-	-	X
<i>Leersia hexandra</i> Swartz	X	X	X
<i>Leptochloa caerulescens</i> Steud.	-	X	-
<i>Loudetia arundinacea</i> A. Rich.) Steud.	-	-	X
<i>Panicum repens</i> L.	-	-	X
<i>Paspalum scrobiculatum</i> L.	-	-	X
<i>Pennisetum polystachion</i> (L.) Schult.	-	-	X
<i>Phragmites karka</i> (Retz.) Steud.	-	-	X
<i>Rhytachene magastachachya</i> Stapf.	-	X	-
<i>Rottboellia cochinchinensis</i> (Lour.) W.D. Clayton.	-	-	X
<i>Sacciolepis africana</i> Hubbard and Snowden	X	X	-
<i>Schizachyrium sanguineum</i> (Retz.) Alston	-	-	X
<i>Setaria pumila</i> (Poir) Roem & Schult	-	-	X
<i>Sporobolus pyramidalis</i> P. Beauv.	-	-	X
<i>Vossia cuspidata</i> Griff.	X	X	X
<i>Vetiveria nigriflora</i> (Benth.) Stapf	-	-	X
Polygonaceae			
<i>Polygonum lanigerum</i> R.Br.	-	X	X
<i>Polygonum senegalensis</i> Meisn.	X	X	-
Pontederiaceae			
<i>Eichhornia crassipes</i> (Mart.) Solms	-	-	X
Salvinaceae			
<i>Salvinia nymphelulla</i> Desv.	X	X	-
Rubiaceae			
<i>Borreria octodon</i> Hepper	-	-	X
Sphenocleaceae			
<i>Sphenoclea zeylanica</i> Gaertn.	-	X	X
Typhaceae			
<i>Typha australis</i> Schum & Thorn	-	-	X

NB:(X) = Presence and (-) = Absence.

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