

## SOROTI

By Godfrey Ojore

Lake Nyaguo, a freshwater lake commonly known as a living museum because of its biodiversity, is endangered by human activity.

Located in eastern Uganda, Lake Nyaguo is shared by three districts of Pallisa, Kumi and Ngora.

Rice growing and catching of immature fish is threatening the home of numerous aquatic life; both native and endemic species.

The species include haplochromine and tilapine species of the cichlidae family that have become extinct from lakes such as Lake Victoria and Kyoga.

"The Nyaguo catchment provides a nesting area for the crested crane, but once

# Encroachers endangering Lake Nyaguo, leaders say

PHOTO BY GODFREY OJORE



**Adoa (right) handing over a signed copy of the plan to an official in Ngora**

the habitat is degraded, it removes that provision," Winne Nakalubo, the director National Fisheries Resources Research Institute, said.

She said spawning and nursery sites for fish have been highly affected on the satellite lake.

The state minister for fisheries,

Hellen Adoa, appealed to the area leadership to ensure that they guard the lake.

"The rare fish species and birds found here position us to

attract more tourists that bring more money compared to rice growing," Adoa said.

She made the remarks during the approval and signing of the Lake Nyaguo management plan held in Ngora district last week.

The management plan provides strategic direction, interventions and management objectives to sustain the lake and its resources.

The plan also intends to create awareness about the threatened aquatic life and their habitats.

Overfishing, agricultural expansion, reed and papyrus harvesting are some of the activities driving away birds such as the crested crane and the shoebill from the lake.

Working together with Rain Forest Trust and the agriculture

ministry, the move is aimed at supporting sustainable market-oriented fish production, management, development, control quality and safety of fisheries products for improved food security and household income.

The Pallisa LC5 boss, Patrick Duchu, said his people are ready to stop rice growing once an alternative is provided.

The minister said the lake was heavily encroached on from the Pallisa side and hoped that locals would embrace the new plan.

"When it rains, the water carries soil into the lake that tilapia and Nile perch cannot stand. The degradation shall make the lake dry and children will miss eating fish," Adoa said.

She said each person is meant to eat 20kg of fish annually, but right now it is at 10kg per person a year.