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The Editor in Chief  
WIOJMS

Dear Prof Jose Paula,

**RE: Manuscript submission- Factors influencing migrant fishers' access to fishing grounds**

We are pleased to present a manuscript submission titled “**Factors influencing migrant fishers' access to fishing grounds**” for consideration for publication in the Western Indian Ocean Journal of Marine Science (WIOJMS). This is original research to assess migrant fishers' resource utilisation in Kenyan destinations. Part of this study presented as a poster titled ‘Migrant fishers' access to fishing grounds: Fishery, ecological, oceanographic and factors’ at the recent WIOMSA symposium in Dar es Salaam. The research work was partially supported through the MASMA research grant.

Fisher migration is a common phenomenon in the small-scale fisheries of East Africa. However the spatial characteristics that attract or determine access to fishing grounds and fishing behavior remain unknown due to the complexity and discrete nature of migrant fisher operations at sea. As such specific spatial information focussing on migrant fisher resource utilisation and fishing grounds remains unknown and decision-making has mainly been ad hoc knee jack reaction to situations. This paper fills this critical information gap by empirically examining the ecological, oceanic and governance factors influencing migrant fishers access to fishing grounds. It is based on study of migrant fishers visiting destinations in Kenya including Vanga-Jimbo, Gazi, Shimoni and Kipini.

Our findings show that migrant fishers at these destination possess knowledge of natural trends, cycles and oceanographic processes that facilitates them in determining areas of abundant target resources. Calm winds during the Northeast monsoon season make favourable conditions for fishing in the north coast while the sheltered nature of fishing grounds in the south coast makes the area to remain accessible even during the rough Southeast monsoon. High fisheries productivity due to sediment loading and supply of particulate matter makes good fishing at specific areas in the south coast. Main catch landed from reefs and deep slopes pelagic species were identified.

This manuscript covers an important aspect of relevance to the Western Indian Ocean Journal of Marine Science. The journal has previously published work on artisanal fisheries research but not featured specific work on migrant fisheries in the region. The region-wide influence of fishers' migration makes the content of this manuscript of regional relevance with regards to artisanal fisheries research and management in the Western Indian Ocean.

Work presented here has not been submitted for consideration to any other journal. The word count in this manuscript is less than 8000. We use colour figures during review and to be applied for the web version only, but will provide black and white figures for print purpose upon acceptance of the paper for publication.

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Thank you for your consideration of this manuscript.

Sincerely yours,



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