



**FF709 Ripple Africa Fish Conservation in Nkhotakota District  
FINAL REPORT**

**Interim or Final report:** Final report

**Donor name:** Fondation Eagle

**Fondation Eagle reference:** FF709

**Name of Charity:** Ripple Africa

**Introduction:** Ripple Africa was seeking further funding towards the cost of the Fish for Tomorrow project in Nkhotakota District to ensure that the project continues to progress in the district until sustainable funding from a District Fishing Permit fee is introduced. In June 2024, a further £56,403 was awarded to enable us to continue to progress the project in the district. This funding was estimated to have been 50% of the annual cost but as we have been cutting our costs wherever possible, we have managed to make this stretch to almost eight months - therefore this is the final report.

**Date of grant accepted:** 4th June 2024

**Amount:** £56,403

**Conversion rate, date & amount in local currency:**

June 2024	2,274 Malawi Kwacha to the £	128,260,422 Malawi Kwacha
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**Name and exact location of the project:** Nkhotakota District, Malawi

**Period of Project:** 6 months

**Project beneficiaries:** This project has ultimately benefited all living in Nkhotakota District. At the last census (2018) there were 393,077 people. Since 2018, World Bank has reported that the population of Malawi has risen by 2.6% pa so Nkhotakota's population in 2024 was likely to be over 450,000.

**Details of the project:**

We are continuing to work with 65 Beach Village Committees (BVCs) and are protecting 13 breeding areas in the district. Joyce Banda continues to run the project with the support of three coordinators. Joyce sits on several district committees and has built up a good working relationship with the District Fisheries Officer and his team. Each month, Joyce and the team have a plan of activities that they undertake which have been agreed with the Fisheries Department and are communicated to all stakeholders.

In the funding period, Joyce and the team have carried out the following activities: Photos of some of the activities carried out are at **Annex 1**.

- Three District Management and Coordinators meetings have been held to help plan activities to be carried out.
- Two meetings have been held with the District Agriculture Extension Coordination Committee and four meetings have been held with other stakeholder groups to update the members on how the project is going and to ensure that these key stakeholders are fully in agreement with the plans for future actions.
- 80 BVCs have been monitored using our monitoring process to highlight any areas where they need to improve. An example of the BVC monitoring form used is at **Annex 2** and the team are then able to easily identify any further training needed to ensure that the BVC is performing their duties as effectively as possible.
- There have been 6 meetings with groups of BVCs who have been underperforming to ensure that all members are aware of their role in the project and their responsibilities.
- 42 inspections have been carried out of breeding areas to ensure that the baby fish are being adequately protected from fishers and other predators. An example of the monitoring form used for these inspections is at **Annex 3**.
- 22 fishing net inspections have taken place on beaches and in shops to ensure that fishers are using legal fishing gears. Coordinators have used this as an opportunity to reinforce the messages of the project.
- 51 community awareness meetings have been held in fishing villages and schools to stress the impact of the project on fish catches, now and in the future.
- 81 meetings have been held with fishers to educate them on the importance of observing the closed season to protect fish when they are breeding. Most fishers are now doing this.
- Ripple Africa took part in Nkhotakota Agriculture Fair to spread the messages of the project to farmers and other community members who might not have been reached through other meetings and events.
- Four meetings were held with Chiefs and Traditional Authorities (Senior Chiefs) to ensure consistency of approach when dealing with fisher using illegal fishing gears.
- 30 one to one meetings were held with fishers who are collecting data on Chambo and Usipa fish catches to ensure that data collected is accurate and is clearly identifying the numbers of fish being caught per beach landing site. This also helps us understand the catch trends and biology of the fish species in different months and the impact of the weather and moon on fish catches (Usipa are attracted into the nets by the use of lamps so Usipa fishing is only successful on nights where the moon is not bright)
- Ripple Africa staff assisted Fisheries with their annual frame survey – a snapshot assessment of fish catches which is carried out in each district. This helped further strengthen the relationship between project coordinators and fisheries staff.

### **Successes**

- The project has managed to take to court six cases of illegal fishing and the fishers concerned were given multiple months to years sentences with hard labour for being found fishing using monofilament nets.
- More fishers are now buying multifilament fishing gears in the district.
- 14 Chilimira fishing gears and eight large monofilament nets have been confiscated.
- 2,000 fishers and thousands of non-fishers living in fishing communities have been educated on the key messages of the project.
- Supervisions and inspections of fishing gears and breeding areas have been carried out in six breeding sanctuaries.
- Communication between BVCs, Village Development Committees and Area Development Committees is strong and ongoing communications will continue.
- Fishers in most areas are now observing the closed season and are using the recommended fishing gears.

## **Challenges**

- Rise in chief disputes and lack of participation towards fisheries management related issues. This is being addressed at meetings with local leaders.
- Non-performing and inactive BVC members in some committees – we are addressing this by revamping and retraining underperforming BVCs.
- Mwera winds have been an issue for weeks at a time, constantly blowing over the lake and hindering patrol activities.
- Migration of fishers from one landing site to another affects catch data collection and causes higher numbers of fishers in some areas.
- In some areas, there is a lack of desire to change among the fishing communities. However, we will continue to communicate the need to change.
- In some areas there is a lack of communication between BVCs and the local chiefs. This will be addressed in upcoming meetings.
- Despite considerable enthusiasm amongst District Councils for the introduction of District Permit Fees to secure sustainable funding for fish conservation in Malawi, the upcoming national election due in September 2025 has meant that there is no possibility of progressing this in Nkhotakota and other districts in which the project is operating until after the election has been held as any such change will require ministerial approval.

## **Detailed budgets and actual expenditure summary and comparison:**

Our budget for six months was £56,403 (128,260,422MK), but we have managed to make the funding last for almost eight months as the actual cost at six months was £43,964 (99,974,136 MK) and the cost at eight months was £58,460 (132,938,040 MK). Our general funding for the Fish for Tomorrow project from other donors has been reduced and so we have been trying to keep our costs as low as possible.

<b>Fish Nkhotakota Fondation Eagle Contribution</b>	<b>Budget MK</b>	<b>Budget £</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Actual</b>
			<b>Total 8 Months Jun to Feb</b>	<b>Total 6 Months Jun to Dec</b>
Salaries – Ripple Africa	22,234,366	£10,588	£14,091	£10,526
Travel and Subsistence - Ripple Africa	6,511,987	£3,101	£4,083	£3,269
Phone and Data Costs	1,147,993	£547	£764	£559
Travel and Subsistence - Fisheries	18,849,451	£8,976	£11,569	£8,814
Travel and Subsistence - Chiefs & Community	21,165,581	£10,079	£4,141	£2,823
Travel and Subsistence - Other Govt staff	4,242,777	£2,020	£1,837	£1,631
Enforcement costs	9,296,245	£4,427	£3,742	£3,223
Monitoring and Evaluation	1,984,500	£945	£1,213	£913
Other	5,401,337	£2,572	£668	£646
Office costs	4,072,794	£1,939	£2,251	£1,170
Vehicle maintenance	5,828,729	£2,776	£4,105	£2,649
Vehicle Fuel	6,692,316	£3,187	£3,833	£2,937
Motorbikes Maintenance	6,168,918	£2,938	£2,067	£1,615
Motorbike Fuel	4,848,371	£2,309	£4,095	£3,190
<b>Total</b>	<b>118,445,365</b>	<b>£56,403</b>	<b>£58,460</b>	<b>£43,964</b>

## **Results:**

This was a continuation of the project that has been running in the district since 2016 and which we will continue to run given funding.

The most important impact of the project has been to ensure that fishers are allowing baby fish to grow by:

- using larger meshed nets to only catch larger adult fish
- protecting the shallow lagoons and river mouths where the baby fish are brought by their parent to grow and thrive
- observing a closed season when breeding is taking place

All of these measures mean that the baby fish are protected and allowed to return to the deeper parts of the lake to grow and breed as adults. As each adult chambo can produce 300 baby fish, the importance of this cannot be overstated. This is ensuring that there is a much greater supply of fish available in the lake, which in turn leads to more income for those working as fishers, fish sellers, boat builders etc.

**Annex 4** shows catch and income data for Kanyenda beach landing site in Nkhosakota District in 2024. From this you can see that the fishers are catching very few small fish and many more larger fish with a consequent increase in the income that they are able to make each month.

This also means that there is more money in the local economy which benefits other businesses such as grocery shops etc. As Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world, this is vitally important to lift people out of poverty. The case studies at **Annex 5** show the impact of the project on some of the individual project beneficiaries.

Fish is Malawi's main source of animal protein so by ensuring that there are more plentiful supplies of larger fish available in the markets, the impact on the diet of Malawians is considerable.

## **Follow up:**

As explained above, our aim has always been to secure sustainable project funding from the introduction of District Permit fees. However, this is now on hold because of Malawi's upcoming national elections in 2025. We plan to continue the project in the districts in which we are currently operating but to reduce costs where possible in line with funding secured. The plans for Nkhosakota District for the next year are to:

- Continue regular Staff Management meetings to keep the project on track.
- Hold regular BVC, Sub-Fisheries Association, Fisheries Association Review and Planning meetings.
- Hold Stakeholder meetings at Community and District/Council level to maintain the impetus of the project.
- Monitor BVC Performance and retrain if needed.
- Revamp underperforming BVCs where required, election of new members and trainings.
- Monitor key breeding areas to ensure protection is being effectively carried out.
- Support Fisheries and BVCs with enforcement activities. – confiscation of illegal nets etc.
- Collect Catch Data.
- Run a closed season awareness campaign before the main breeding season.
- Hold fishers' meetings and Chiefs' meetings to reinforce messages of the project.
- Run school awareness campaigns.

- Inspect shops to identify those selling monofilament nets, confiscate nets and issue fines.
- Update and verify fishers' data.
- Assist Fisheries with the Annual Frame Survey.
- Continue with efforts to introduce District Permit fees (after the forthcoming national elections).

### **Conclusion:**

We have achieved most of our objectives, but are disappointed that for reasons beyond our control, we have still been unable to introduce the District Permit Fees which will provide sustainable long term funding for the project. We will continue to seek funding to enable us to continue the work until such time as we are able to introduced the Permit Fees.

The case studies, however, are a snapshot of the impact that the project is making on some of those most directly affected by the project. The availability of larger fish has improved considerably and as fish is Malawi's main source of animal protein, this is having a very beneficial impact on the diet of Malawians.



Pam Haigh  
UK General Manager  
19<sup>th</sup> March 2025

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Manvamba BVC members during evaluation and empowerment meeting, Nkhotakota District



Stakeholders meeting with police officers to discuss enforcement and case handling management, Nkhotakota District



Large mosquito net confiscated by Sub-Fisheries Association, Nkhotakota District



Ripple Africa banner for Fish for Tomorrow project on display at Nhkotakota Agricultural event



District Council Stakeholders Meeting, Nkhotakota District



District Executive Council members during the project progress report presentation, Nkhotakota District





Fishers caught mending monofilament nets during inspection, Nkhotakota District. These nets were confiscated.



District coordinators training meeting, Nkhotakota District



Confiscated boat and monofilament fishing net, Nkhotakota District



## Example of BVC monitoring

## Annex 2

### TA Malengachazi, Nkhotakota

#### BVC PERFORMANCE

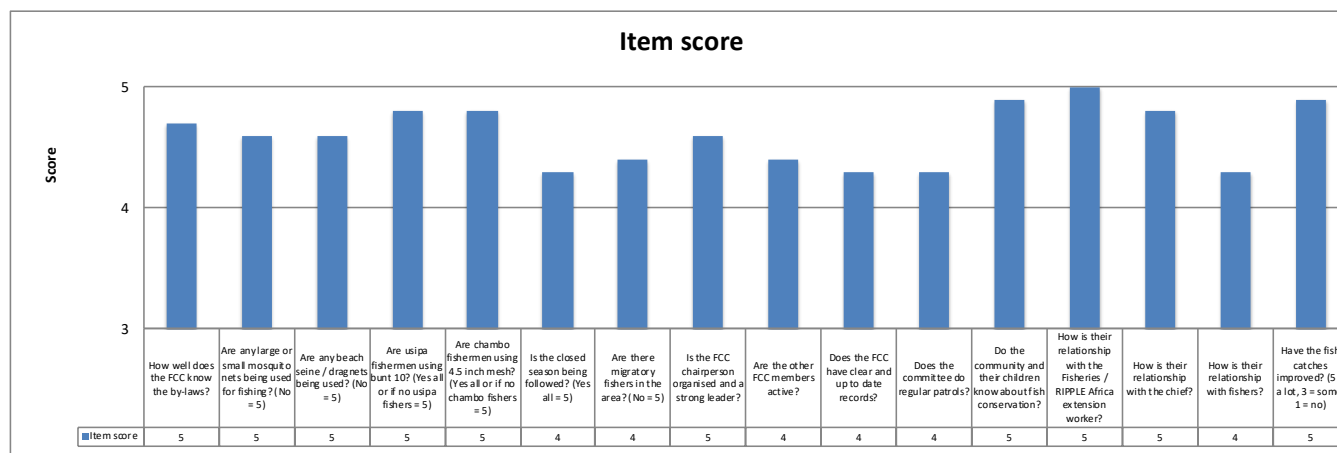
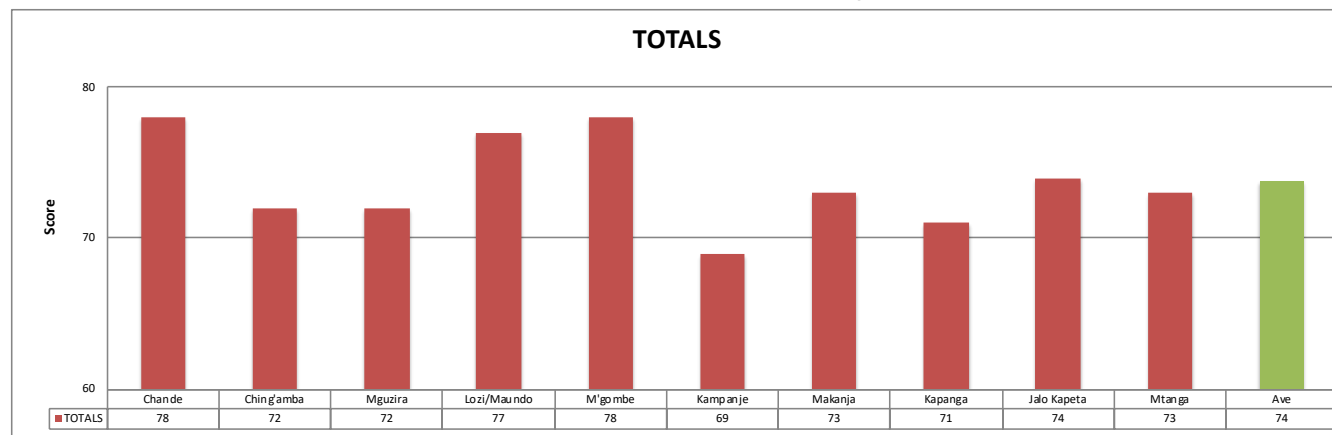
Date: 25-Jul-24		Qty	10	MAX each	80	Max all	800	Total all	737	Ave	74	
		Names and numbers (1 to 10)										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Item score
Stratum: 05-Jan-00		Chande	Ching'amba	Mguzira	Lozi/Maundo	M'gombe	kampanje	Makanja	Kapanga	Jalo Kapeta	Mtanga	Average
RIPPLE Manager: Joyce Banda												
Extension worker: Christopher Chisesa												
District: Nkhota-kota												
TA: Malengachazi												
TOPIC	ITEM											
Bylaws - Gear	How well does the FCC know the by-laws?	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5
Bylaws - Gear	Are any large or small mosquito nets being used for fishing? (No = 5)	5	4	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	5
Bylaws - Gear	Are any beach seine / dragnets being used? (No = 5)	5	4	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	5
Bylaws - Gear	Are usipa fishermen using bunt 10? (Yes all or if no usipa fishers = 5)	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5
Bylaws - Gear	Are chambo fishermen using 4.5 inch mesh? (Yes all or if no chambo fishers = 5)	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	5
Bylaws - Other	Is the closed season being followed? (Yes all = 5)	5	4	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4
Bylaws - Other	Are there migratory fishers in the area? (No = 5)	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	5	4
Leadership	Is the FCC chairperson organised and a strong leader?	5	5	4	5	5	4	4	5	5	4	5
Leadership	Are the other FCC members active?	5	4	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4
Records	Does the FCC have clear and up to date records?	5	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Activities	Does the committee do regular patrols?	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	4
Activities	Do the community and their children know about fish conservation?	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Relationships	How is their relationship with the Fisheries / RIPPLE Africa extension worker?	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Relationships	How is their relationship with the chief?	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5
Relationships	How is their relationship with fishers?	4	5	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	5	4
Fish catches	Have the fish catches improved? (5 = a lot, 3 = some, 1 = no)	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
TOTALS		78	72	72	77	78	69	73	71	74	73	74

5 = Excellent, 4 = Good, 3 = Average, 2 = Poor, 1 = Very Poor

#### BVC PERFORMANCE

#### Total and Average Scores 1-10

TA: Nkhota-kota



## Example of Breeding Area monitoring

## Annex 3

### TA Kafuzira, Nkhotakota

#### FISH BREEDING AREA PERFORMANCE

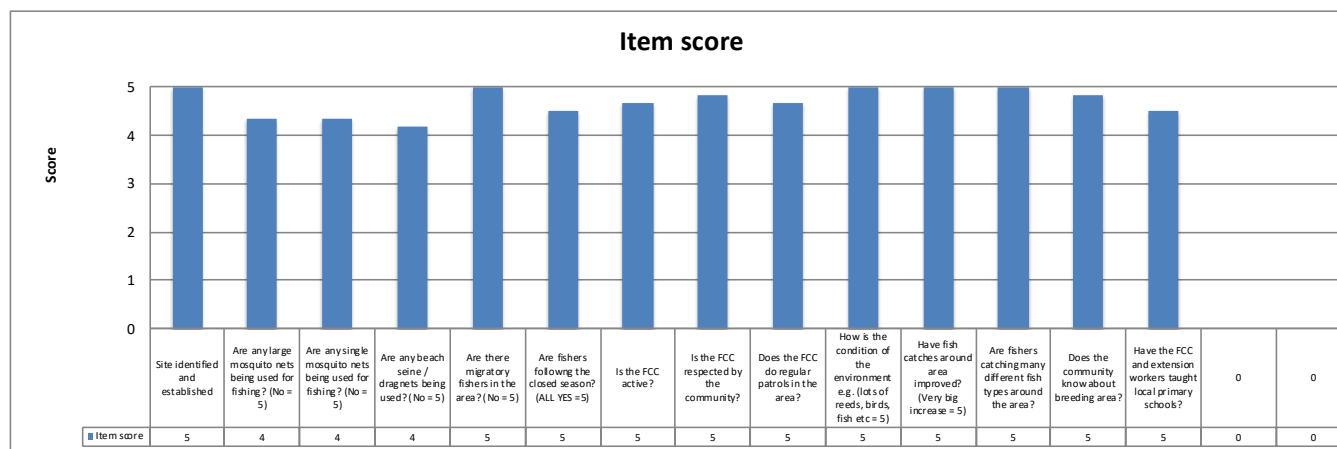
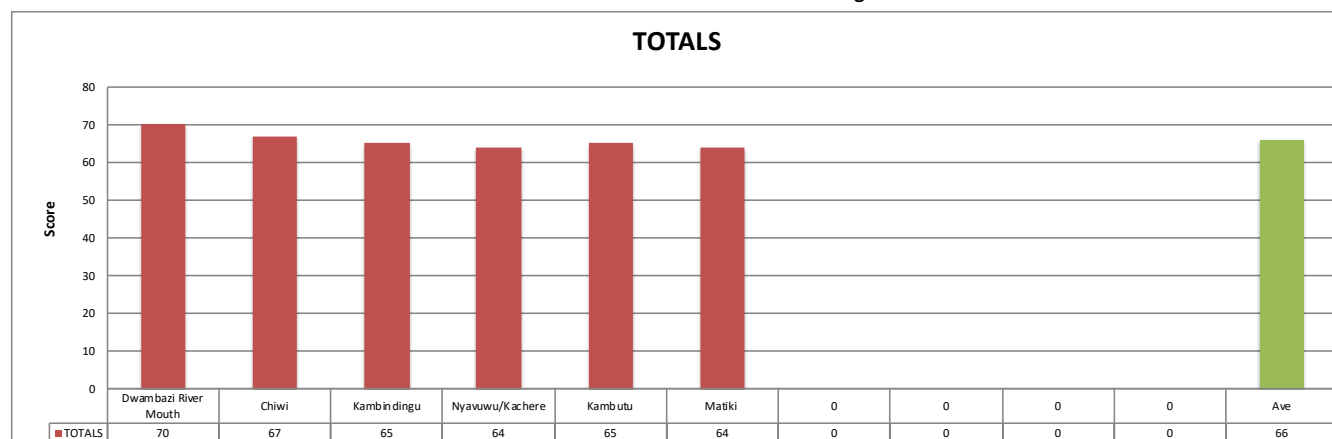
Date: 01-Aug-24		Qty	6	MAX each	70	Max all	420	Total all	395	Ave	66	
		Names and numbers (1 to 10)										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Item score
Stratum:	05-Jan-00	Dwambazi River Mouth	Chiwi	Kambindingu	Nyavuvu/Kachere	Kambutu	Matiki					Average
RIPLLE Manager:	Joyce Banda											
Extension worker:	Wingstone Machemba											
District:	Nkhota-kota											
TA:	Kafuzira											
TOPIC	ITEM	Dwambazi River Mouth	Chiwi	Kambindingu	Nyavuvu/Kachere	Kambutu	Matiki					Ave
Area	Site identified and established	5	5	5	5	5	5					5
By-laws	Are any large mosquito nets being used for fishing? (No = 5)	5	5	4	4	4	4					4
By-laws	Are any single mosquito nets being used for fishing? (No = 5)	5	5	4	4	4	4					4
By-laws	Are any beach seine / dragnets being used? (No = 5)	5	4	4	4	4	4					4
By-laws	Are there migratory fishers in the area? (No = 5)	5	5	5	5	5	5					5
By-laws	Are fishers following the closed season? (ALL YES =5)	5	5	5	4	4	4					5
FCC performance	Is the FCC active?	5	4	4	5	5	5					5
FCC Activities	Is the FCC respected by the community?	5	5	5	4	5	5					5
FCC Activities	Does the FCC do regular patrols in the area?	5	4	4	5	5	5					5
Ecology	How is the condition of the environment e.g. (lots of reeds, birds, fish etc = 5)	5	5	5	5	5	5					5
Catches	Have fish catches around area improved? (Very big increase = 5)	5	5	5	5	5	5					5
Catches	Are fishers catching many different fish types around the area?	5	5	5	5	5	5					5
Awareness	Does the community know about breeding area?	5	5	5	5	5	4					5
Awareness	Have the FCC and extension workers taught local primary schools?	5	5	5	4	4	4					5
TOTALS		70	67	65	64	65	64					66

5 = Excellent, 4 = Good, 3 = Average, 2 = Poor, 1 = Very Poor

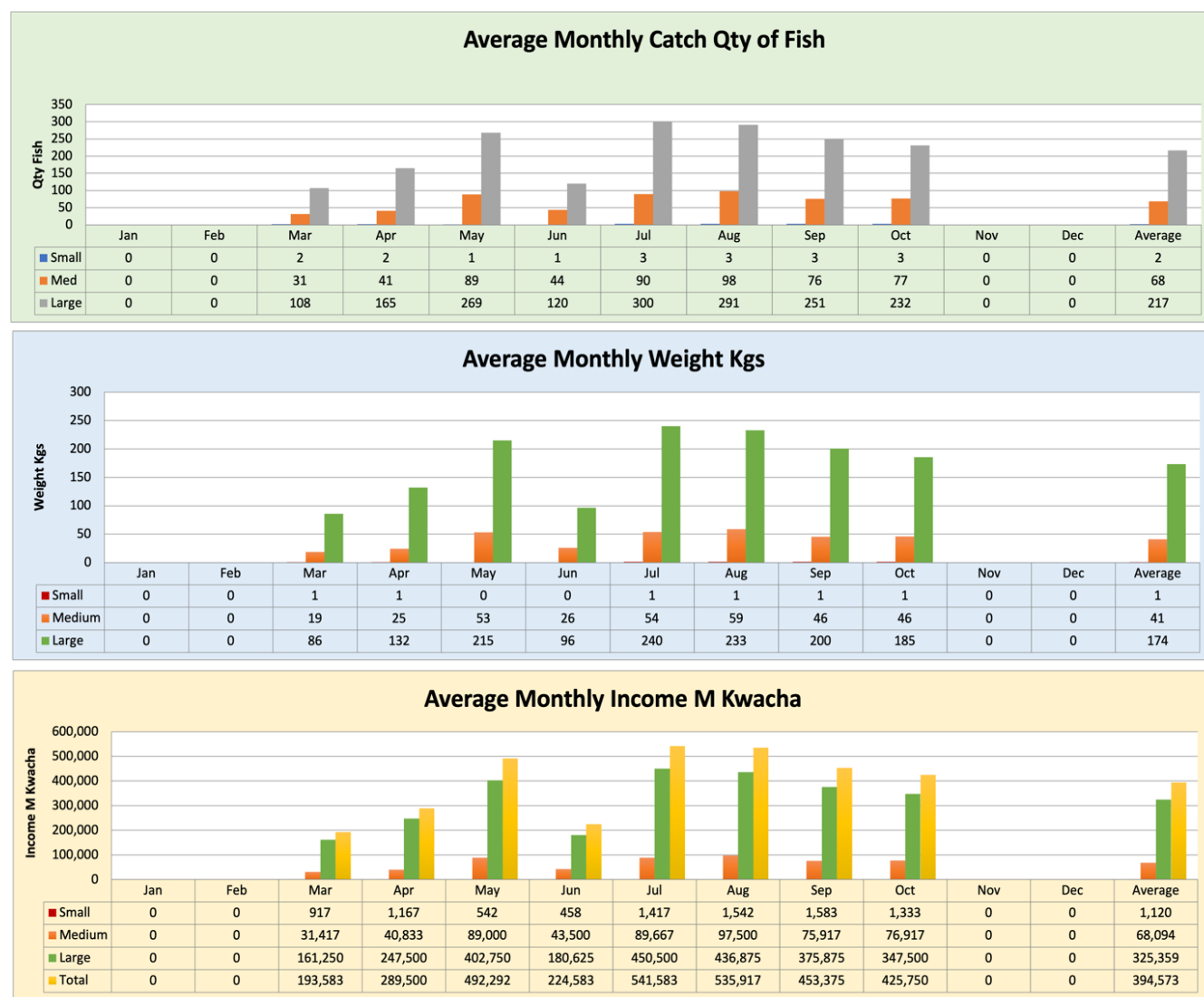
#### FISH BREEDING AREA PERFORMANCE

#### Total and Average Scores 1-10

TA: Nkhota-kota



## 2024 Chambo Catch Data for Kanyenda, Nkhotakota District



As you can see, very few smaller fish were caught during the fishing season and the significantly higher value of larger fish meant that the overall average income for fishers at this beach landing site was therefore much higher.

**Tabu Biyola** is a 45-year-old woman, married with children, who comes from Liwaladzi trading center in Nkhotakota District.

She joined her local Beach Village Committee in January 2024 when it was revamped as the previous committee had not been very effective. She attended the training sessions conducted by Ripple Africa and became so excited about the project that she decided to start selling fish as there were now so many more being caught by fishers in her area. This became the launch pad for a very successful fishing business. After selling fish for a few months, she earned enough money to be able to buy a boat with an engine and Chilimira fishing gear to enable her to start catching Usipa herself. She has been able to employ nine fishers and is now making a very healthy profit.



She has managed to build a new house for her family and is now also able to help out her relatives, and pay school fees for her children and family members. She is very grateful to Ripple Africa for this project which has helped her a lot. She was recently elected Beach Village Committee treasurer because of her business acumen. This has boosted her self esteem and she feels very proud of her role in the Beach Village Committee and her business.

**Loti Kaulanda** is a 57 year old fisherman at Liwaladzi beach landing site . He is married with 5 Children. Loti started his fishing business in 2012 using smaller meshed (but still legal) Usipa fishing nets. Business was not good for him because he caught mainly small fish and was not able to earn enough to be able to feed his family, help his relatives or pay school fees for his children.

Last year, he was elected to the newly formed Beach Village Committee in his area which was revamped because the previous committee was ineffective. After learning at the training in 2024 that other fishers were catching larger Usipa by using larger meshed Usipa nets, he decided to borrow money to purchase a larger meshed Bunt 12 Chilimira net. He is now able to catch bigger Usipa which he is selling at six times what he was making in past years.

As well as paying back his government loan, he has managed to send his children back to school, buy a new engine for his boat and purchase land he is cultivating to be able to support his family with food.

He is now urging his fellow fishers to buy Bunt 12 nets and make more money to improve their lives while conserving fish for tomorrow. He is very thankful to Ripple Africa for this project because his life is so much better than before.





**Emmanuel Mamwangwe** comes from Chongole Village in Nkhotakota district. He started fishing in 2002 using illegal fishing gears in Chia Lagoon and the lake but it was difficult for him to catch enough fish to help him earn a good living.

After resisting the project for many years, in 2024 he attended one of the fishers' meetings which was conducted by Ripple Africa. The meeting changed the way he thinks about his fishing. He listened to the evidence that other fishers were catching much bigger fish and earning more money and learned that protecting baby fish would mean that there would be more fish in the lake in the future.

In 2024, Emmanuel bought new legal fishing gear for both Chambo and Usipa fishing and he is now catching much bigger fish.

In the past he was making less than 20,000 Malawi Kwacha per day but now he is making more than 150,000 kwachas per day from his Usipa catch and 70,000 Kwacha from Chambo.

He doesn't fish every day, but the increased income has made a tremendous difference to him and his entire family because he is saving more money and is able to pay school fees and improve his house.



With encouragement from Ripple Africa, he has recently joined a cooperative which works with other fishers to teach them how to save money. He is now a passionate advocate for the project and teaches other fishers about the importance of practicing legal fishing activities to conserve fish in Chia Lagoon, one of the largest Chambo breeding areas of Malawi.

**Hellen Zaya**, aged 54, comes from Maluma Village in Nkhotakota and is married with 6 children. She started her business career making and selling donuts in 2022.

In 2023 she started buying fish from local fishers to sell in Lilongwe and Kasungu. In 2024, having seen how many larger fish she was now able to sell, she decided to buy her own Usipa fishing boat and employ fishers to catch fish for her. With the profit that she has made from her fishing business, she has been able to open a grocery shop, build a new house for her family and is paying school fees for her children and those of her relatives.



She is very happy that the project is also helping to transform the lives of other women in her area by increasing the income that fishers are making from their fishing businesses; she feels that this has really helped reduce poverty not only in her area but in the whole of Nkhotakota district.