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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### RAINFALL VARIABILITY ON POLLUTANTS DYNAMICS IN KINAWATAKA WETLAND STREAMS, KAMPALA-UGANDA

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#### ABSTRACT

In this study, assessment of rainfall variability on wetland pollutants dynamics was done. Results indicated monthly rainfall totals and anomaly increasing at non significant rate and similar faecal coliform numbers between months for all streams ( $p > 0.05$ ). All streams except Concorp and Pepsi had similar Total Suspended Solids (TSS) concentration for the months ( $p > 0.05$ ). Relationship of total rainfall with faecal coliforms was significantly negative and weak in Kyambogo, Banda and Outlet streams ( $p < 0.05$ ). However, Pepsi and Concorp streams showed positively weak but significant relationship ( $P < 0.05$ ). TSS concentration and total rainfall had significantly negative and weak relationship for Pepsi and Outlet streams ( $p < 0.05$ ) while Concorp, Kyambogo and Banda streams had significantly positive but weak relationship ( $p < 0.05$ ). Faecal coliform loads were similar between dry months for all streams ( $P > 0.05$ ). TSS loads between dry months were significant except for Concorp stream. There was faecal coliform dilution in Kyambogo and outlet streams, and the effect was significant for TSS loads in all streams. Monthly retention ranged from 99.9 - 99.5% and 94.6 - 98.0% for faecal coliforms and TSS respectively. The study indicates that catchment designs coupled with human activities contribute to potential pollutants dynamics in wetlands.

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#### INTRODUCTION

Africa is one of the most vulnerable regions in the world to climate change (Lovejoy and Hammer, 2005). The vulnerability and limitation of poor countries to adapt to climate change challenges are highlighted in various climate change Assessment Reports of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). However, the emerging phenomenon of climate change manifested in climate variability is inadequately understood for most African ecosystems. Climate is a natural resource and also key determinant of the status of other natural resources which should be harnessed and effectively utilized for socio-economic development (Ministry of Water and Environment, 2001; Environmental Alert, GEF and UNEP, 2007). The vulnerability assessment carried in Uganda identifies change in precipitation as the most important climate change impacts; some areas of the country are likely to receive more rainfall while others less (Ministry of Lands, Water and Environment, 2000). This will affect many ecosystems including wetlands. The impact of climate variability was observed during the El Nino period (1997/1998) where aquatic sedges (*Cyperus papyrus*) expanded rapidly within Lake Victoria basin. Most landing

sites were abandoned due to flooding and emergent sedges gradually covered the areas, as a result, fishing activities were impaired. It was also observed that with the rapid decline in the lake level during the drier period, which resulted in the extension of the shore line, plant growth was gradually reduced and the stretch of the surface along the shoreline was bare sand beach or dry mud. Effect of such changes on pollutants dynamics in wetlands could be enormous.

Wetlands are of great ecological and social-economic value and yet these important natural assets have been considerably degraded and altered due to human and natural factors (Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project, 2005; Opio *et al.*, 2011). The degradation of wetlands is by on-site factors (e.g. impoundments and drainage) and off-site or upland areas where clearing may enhance run-off, erosion, sedimentation, and accumulation of organic and inorganic solutes and particulates (Sahagian and Melack, 1996). However, from the perspective of land use, wetlands are important as a direct source of food and various other products (e.g. fuel wood and timber), grazing grounds, and drinking and irrigation water sources. Therefore, uplands surrounding need to be taken into account for proper management of wetlands (Acreman, 2000)

because of their controls on hydrology and nutrient supply into wetlands (Gomani *et al.*, 2010; De Winnaar and Jewitt, 2010). Hydrologic, biogeochemical, and maintenance of habitat and food webs are the major wetlands functions (Sahagian and Melack, 1996; Kansime and Nalubega, 1999; EC RTS INCO-DEV programme, 2001). The hydrologic functions include surface water storage, and high water table maintenance. Transformation and cycling of elements, retention and removal of dissolved substances from surface waters and accumulation of peats and inorganic sediments form the biogeochemical functions. However, the performance of wetlands in improving wastewater quality depends on applied loading rates and natural conditions i.e. wetland structure, hydraulic and water flow pattern within the wetlands (Hammer and Kadlec, 1986; Kadlec and Knight, 1996; Kansime and Nalubega, 1999; Azza *et al.*, 2000; Kanyiginya *et al.*, 2010). Habitat and food web support includes maintenance of biodiversity which provide food and habitat for other animals. Such functions may be impaired by rainfall variability.

Though Swan (2010) reported urban growth in most areas as geared to rectification of existing drainage problems, however, on some instances the situations have worsened affecting eco-hydrology of ecosystems with ultimate effect on ecological functions and biodiversity shift range. Expanding impervious surface areas which increases volume of runoff after high rainfall intensity suggests investigation of the benefits on aquatic systems services. In this regards, the documentation of impacts of rainfall variability on wetlands functioning is important. This paper highlights rainfall effects on wetland pollutants dynamics in the inflow and outflow streams of Kinawataka wetland, and the relationship with monthly rainfall totals and anomaly assessed.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Study area

The study was conducted in Kinawataka wetland - Kampala, located between 0° 20' to 0° 22' N and 32° 37' to 32° 39' E at an altitude ranging from 1,158 - 1,173 m above sea level. Kinawataka wetland is approximately 6.5 km east of Kampala City center along Kampala-Jinja highway and covers approximately 1.5 km<sup>2</sup>. Its catchment has been degraded as a result of industrialization and urbanization. The industrial and domestic effluents are discharged into the streams that flow into Kinawataka wetland before entering Murchison bay in Lake Victoria.

### Sampling techniques

To understand pollutants dynamics in the wetland, assessment was carried out in 1999 for bacteriological indicators (faecal coliforms) and total suspended solids (TSS) in the inflow and outflow streams of the wetland. The major inflows into the wetland were Pepsi (S<sub>1</sub>), Vubyobirenge (S<sub>2</sub>), Kyambogo (S<sub>3</sub>), and Kawoya (S<sub>4</sub>), and outflow was the Outlet (S<sub>5</sub>) (Figure 1). Water samples for bacteriological and total suspended solids (TSS) analyses were collected in sterile sample bottles (250 ml) and plastic bottles (500ml). The plastic bottles were thoroughly rinsed with dilute acid. All sample bottles were rinsed with the sample water before collection. Collected samples were stored in a cool box for transportation to

laboratory for analyses within 6 hours. Samples were picked from 9.00 - 11.00 am of each day. Sampling regime covered both the wet and dry months.

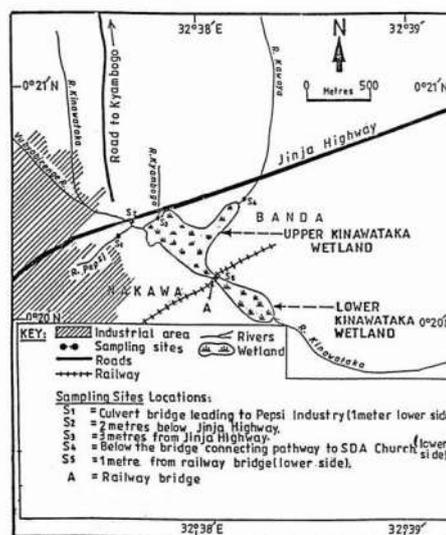


Figure 1: Sampling sites in the inflow and outflow streams of Kinawataka wetland

### Laboratory analysis

Faecal coliforms were determined by membrane filtration method (APHA, 1992). Presumptive faecal coliforms were analyzed directly on a pad saturated with Lauryl sulphate broth incubated at temperature of 44°C for 16 - 18hrs. Yellow colonies were taken as presumptive faecal coliforms. TSS was determined using gravimetric method according to APHA (1992).

### Stream discharge

Water flow at the inflow and outflow streams of Kinawataka wetland was determined using a floatation method. Discharge was computed from the cross sectional area and flow speed of the streams. The loads of the pollutants were calculated by multiplying discharge (m<sup>3</sup>/s) by the concentration of pollutants.

### Rainfall data

Daily rainfall totals (mm) data for the period 1976 to 2006 was obtained from Department of Meteorology, Uganda. This was obtained for the meteorological station number 89320910 located at National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC), Kampala.

### Data analysis

Rainfall data was checked for consistency as quality control measure. The anomaly of monthly rainfall totals was computed. Time series graph was plotted to reflect variability in the trends of the normalized rainfall for the months of 1999. The percentage rainfall anomalies during the months were calculated from the 30 year (1976 - 2006) monthly rainfall totals (LTA) to determine drought and flood events.

$$\frac{\text{Monthly rainfall total}}{\text{LTA}} \times 100\%$$

The anomalies were categorized based on the percentage ranges according to World Meteorological Organization (WMO) recommendations: < 75% of the LTA is drought of varying intensities; 75 - 125% of LTA is normal rainfall and >125% of the LTA indicates flooding.

Mean discharge for wet and dry months were used to compute the loads of pollutants in the streams during the different months. The seasonality of each month was categorized according to Uganda meteorological standards. The dry months were December, January, February, June, July and August while the wet months included March, April, May, September, October and November.

Statistical analysis for monthly rainfall totals and anomaly, faecal coliforms and TSS was done using the minitab software (MINITAB) Release 10 for windows. A non-parametric test, Kruskal-Wallis was used for data analysis. Correlation of monthly rainfall totals with pollutants levels and loads was also determined. Any statistical probability less than 0.05 was considered significant.

**RESULTS**

**Total monthly rainfall and percentage (%) anomaly for the year 1999**

The total monthly rainfall and anomaly for the year 1999 is shown in Figure 2.

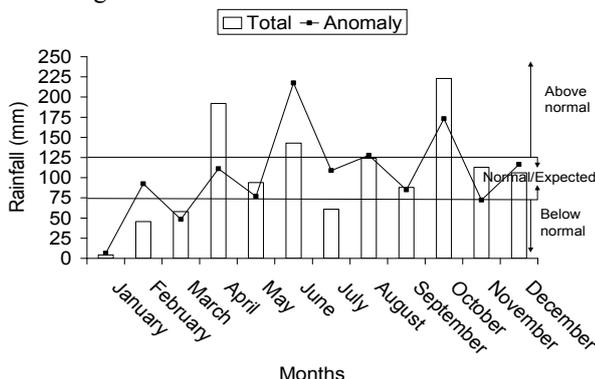


Figure 2: Total monthly rainfall and percentage anomaly for the period from January to December, 1999

The months of April and October, 1999 had the highest monthly rainfall totals. Lower rainfall totals were observed for the months of January, February, March and July. The relationship of monthly total rainfall trend over the months is presented in Figure 3.

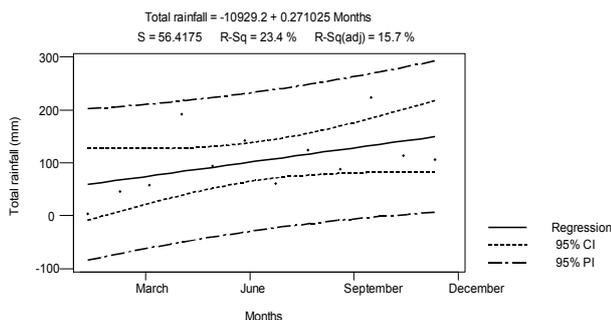


Figure 3: Trend of monthly rainfall from January to December, 1999

The trend of monthly total rainfall during the year 1999 increased at non significant rate of 0.271 month<sup>-1</sup> (F = 3.054, p = 0.111). Relationship of rainfall amount to months was weakly positive (R<sup>2</sup> = 0.234). Inter-seasonal rainfall amount was not significantly different (p = 0.195). Monthly rainfall anomaly during the year 1999 was 25%, 41.7% and 33.3% of rainfall period in the category of above normal, normal and below normal respectively. The rainfalls during the research period (May – September, 1999) were normal except for the month of July that had below normal rainfall. The relationship of rainfall trend anomalies in the different months is presented in Figure 4.

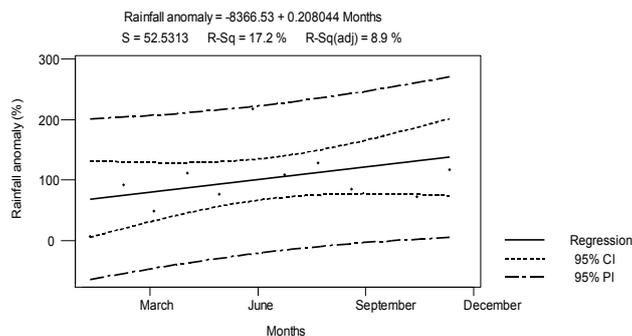
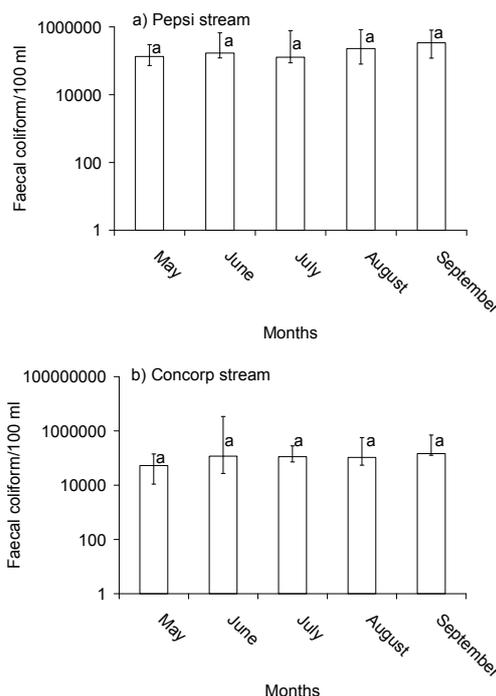


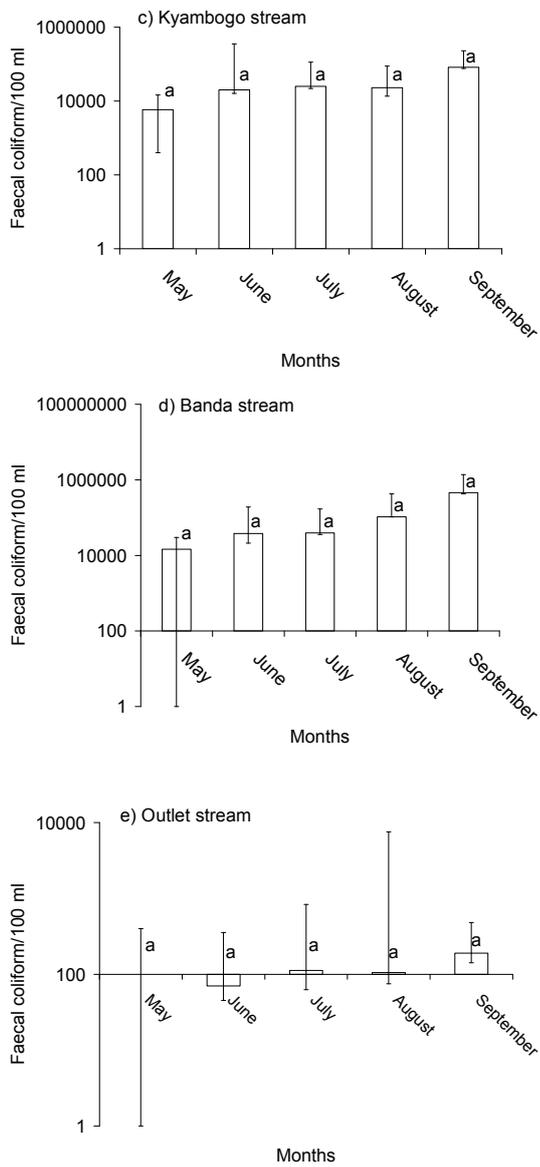
Figure 4: Relationship of rainfall anomaly trend monthly from January to December, 1999

The trend of monthly rainfall anomaly in 1999 increased at non significant rate of 0.208 month<sup>-1</sup> (F = 2.076, p = 0.180). Rainfall anomaly was weak and positively related to the months (R<sup>2</sup> = 0.172). Inter seasonal rainfall anomaly was not significantly different (p = 0.614).

**Mean monthly faecal coliforms numbers in the inflow and outflow streams of Kinawataka wetland**

The faecal coliform numbers in the streams for the different months are presented in Figure 5.



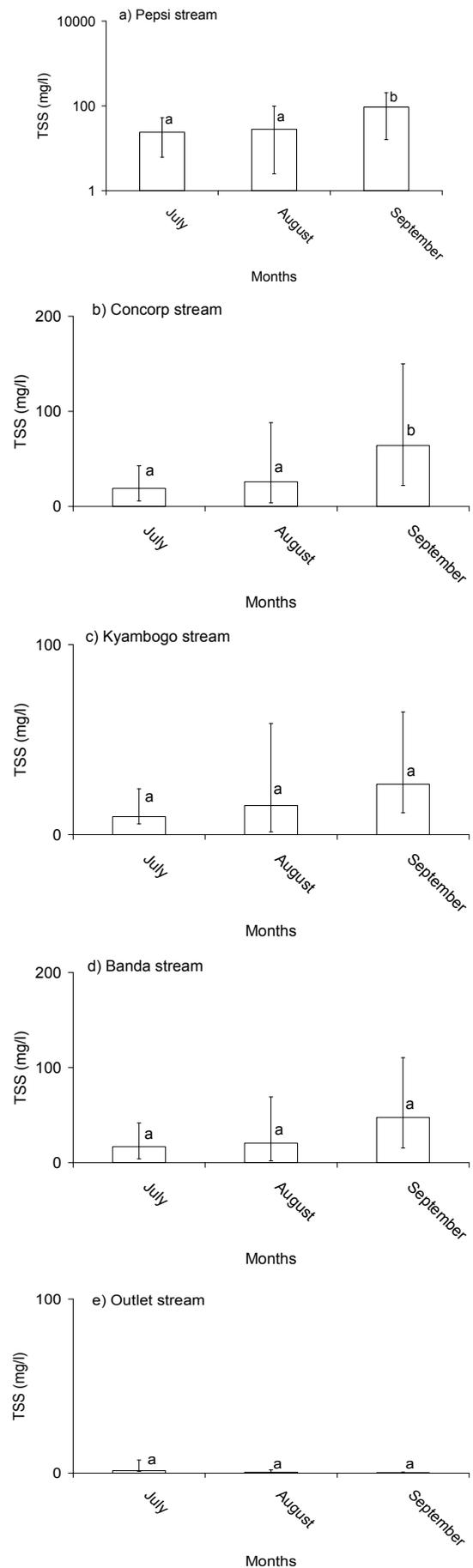


**Figure 5 (a, b, c, d and e): Faecal coliforms in the inflow and outflow streams of Kinawataka wetland for the different months of 1999. Errors bars represent maximum and minimum numbers. Similar letters indicate non significant difference**

Banda stream exhibited gradual increase in faecal coliform numbers from May to September. The rest of the streams had relatively similar faecal coliform numbers in the months of June, July and August, with May and September exhibiting lowest and highest faecal coliform numbers respectively. Faecal coliform numbers were not significantly different in Pepsi, Concorp, Kyambogo, Banda and outlet streams for all the months ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Mean monthly TSS concentration in the inflow and outflow streams of Kinawataka wetland**

The variability of TSS concentration in the streams is presented in Figure 6. TSS concentrations increased from July to September except for the outlet stream that exhibited reverse trend. TSS concentration in Pepsi and Concorp streams were significantly different within the months. Banda, Kyambogo and Outlet streams had similar TSS concentration for the different months.



**Figure 3 (a, b, c, d and e): TSS concentrations in the inflow and outflow streams of Kinawataka wetland in the different months of 1999. Errors bars represent maximum and minimum concentrations. Similar letters indicate non significant difference**

### Relationship of monthly total rainfall with pollutants levels in the inflow and outflow streams of Kinawataka wetland

The Pearson correlation of monthly total rainfall with faecal coliform numbers and TSS concentrations in the inflow and outflow streams of Kinawataka wetland is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Pearson correlation of the pollutants with monthly total rainfall**

Streams	Faecal coliforms	TSS
Pepsi (S <sub>1</sub> )	r = 0.086, p = 0.891	r = -0.027, p = 0.983
Concorp (S <sub>2</sub> )	r = 0.027, p = 0.966	r = 0.058, p = 0.963
Kyambogo (S <sub>3</sub> )	r = -0.237, p = 0.701	r = 0.257, p = 0.835
Banda (S <sub>4</sub> )	r = -0.180, p = 0.772	r = 0.029, p = 0.982
Outlet (S <sub>5</sub> )	r = -0.505, p = 0.385	r = -0.687, p = 0.518

There was significantly negative and weak correlation for faecal coliforms at Kyambogo, Banda and Outlet streams. However, the relationship was stronger for the outlet stream. Pepsi and Concorp streams had weak and positive but significant relationship. The relationship of TSS concentration with total monthly rainfall was significant for all the streams. Pepsi and Outlet streams exhibited negative relationship. However, outlet exhibited stronger relationship. Concorp, Kyambogo and Banda streams had positively weak relationship.

### Mean monthly loads of pollutants in the inflow and outflow streams of Kinawataka wetland

Only loads for the dry months were computed. This is because surface runoff into the streams during the wet months was not estimated. The loads of faecal coliforms in the streams during the dry months are presented in Figure 3.

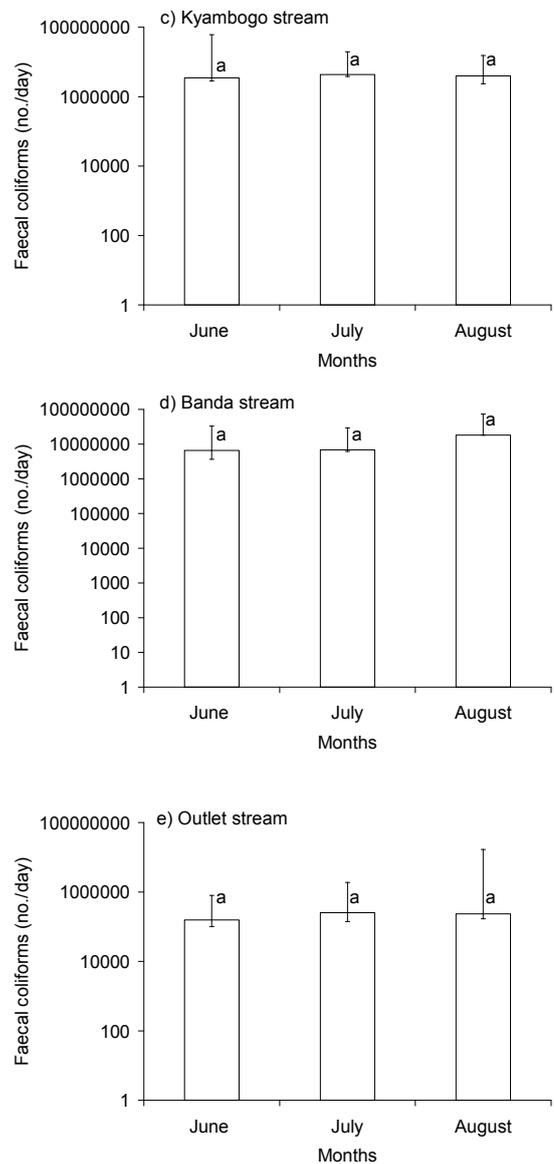
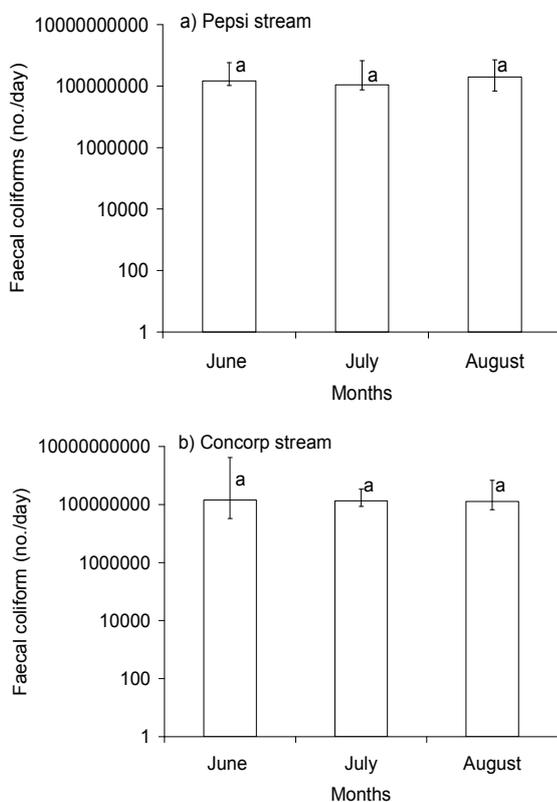
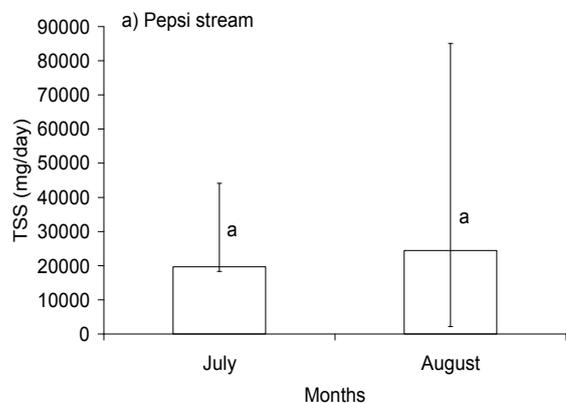
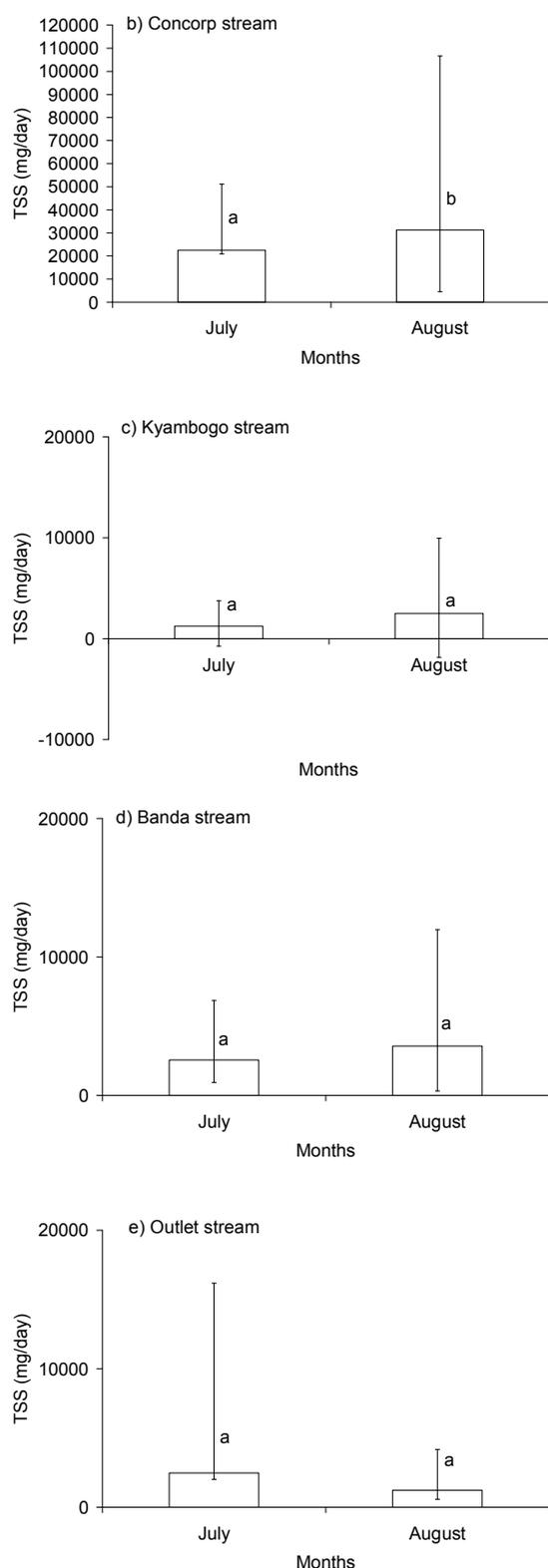


Figure 3 (a, b, c, d and e): Faecal coliforms loads in the inflow and outflow streams of Kinawataka during the dry months. Similar letters indicate non significant difference. There were relatively similar loads of faecal coliforms in all the streams for the different dry months. The loads were not significant between the dry months for all the streams ( $p > 0.05$ ).





**Figure 4. The TSS loads of the dry months for the inflow and outflow streams of Kinawataka wetland**

The load of TSS was higher in the dry month of August for all the streams except for the Outlet stream that had higher load in July. High loads exhibited high variability as well. TSS loads were non significant between the dry months except for Concorp stream.

#### Relationship of rainfall amounts with the pollutants loads in Kinawataka streams

The impact of rainfall on the pollutants loads was determined using Pearson correlation. The relationship between total monthly rainfall with faecal coliforms and TSS loads for the inflow and outflow streams were determined (Table 2).

**Table 2: Pearson correlation of total monthly rainfall with faecal coliforms and TSS loads**

Stream	Faecal coliforms	TSS
Pepsi (S <sub>1</sub> )	$r = 0.662, p = 0.539$	$r = -0.532, p = 0.643$
Concorp (S <sub>2</sub> )	$r = 0.256, p = 0.835$	$r = -0.454, p = 0.700$
Kyambogo (S <sub>3</sub> )	$r = -0.918, p = 0.259$	$r = -0.212, p = 0.864$
Banda (S <sub>4</sub> )	$r = 0.275, p = 0.823$	$r = -0.455, p = 0.700$
Outlet (S <sub>5</sub> )	$r = -0.792, p = 0.418$	$r = -0.955, p = 0.191$

The relationships were significantly different for both faecal coliforms and TSS loads ( $p > 0.05$ ). Faecal coliform loads and total monthly rainfall had negatively strong relationship for kyambogo and outlet streams while TSS had negative strong relationship for all the streams.

#### Monthly retention of faecal coliforms and TSS in Kinawataka wetland

The retention of the pollutants by the wetland during the dry months is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Retention of pollutants in Kinawataka wetland during the dry months**

Dry months	Faecal coliforms	TSS
June	99.95	-
July	99.90	94.62
August	99.93	98.00

Retention was similar for faecal coliforms but slightly different for TSS during the dry months. The retention of TSS increased towards the end of the dry season (August).

## DISCUSSION

The year 1999 exhibited non significant rates in the rainfall trend. Rainfalls during the research period (May - September) were categorized as normal for activity except for the month of July that had below normal rainfall. Such changes in rainfall amounts are known to play an important role for wetlands established in depression and may also be important for adjusting the size of lacustrine wetlands through seasonal wet and dry regimes of the edges (Pattern, 1990; NEMA, 2005). In addition, the amount of water in the wetlands fluctuates with such regimes. Howell *et al.* (1998) also reported that seasonal variability of water depth and nutrient status of water normally controls the types and distribution of wetlands. Kyambogo, Banda and Outlet streams exhibited negative correlation of faecal coliforms numbers with monthly rainfall totals. Similar result was observed for TSS in Pepsi and Outlet streams. The relationships were all significant. This depicts dilution effect of rainfall on the pollutants in the streams. Natural substances from erosion (suspended matter) exponentially increase in concentration with increased discharge and introduced substances decrease with increasing discharge (Chapman and Kimstach, 1992). TSS in all the streams decreased with increasing discharge. This implies less TSS is derived from surface or bank erosion. This can be

explained by the well built up channels of concrete and stones that helps to stabilize the channel walls. Therefore, the high discharge of the streams is basically less turbid water from roof tops that are directed into the channels that pour into the streams. To understand dilution effect on pollutants concentrations, Kansime and Nalubega (1999) suggested the use of the ratio of pollutants concentration to electrical conductivity in streams. The ratio lowers with increasing dilution. The decreasing TSS concentrations in the Outlet during the dry months imply reduced strength of flushing from the wetland towards the end of dry season. Floating *Cyperus papyrus* wetlands retain more volume of water during wet months which is gradually release into the beginning of dry months.

In broad terms, large catchments respond to long duration rainfall (over weeks or months) whereas flooding on small catchments is normally caused by brief intense rainfall such as thunderstorms, and the size of flood is also determined by the proportion of rainfall that reaches the stream and the speed of runoff (Acreman, 2000; De Winnaar and Jewitt, 2010). Deforestation and urban developments (with large areas of roof tops, roads, car parks etc) with soils that are compacted and compounds that are covered with concrete, are usually impermeable, so a high proportion of the rainfall runs off rapidly into the streams causing dilution. In addition, very few practice rain water harvesting. Therefore rain water gradually ends up into the streams increasing discharge. Positive relationship of faecal coliform loads in Pepsi, Concorp and Banda streams is attributable to the discharge from on site sanitary systems (latrines and leaking septic tanks).

The retention trend of TSS increased towards the end of the dry season but faecal coliforms was relatively the same for all the months. It is clear from this study and other studies that wetlands act as a shield between the catchment drainage areas and water bodies by filtering excess run off and pollutants from agriculture, urban and industrial areas ((Seidal *et al.*, 1978; McCambridge and McMeekin, 1979; Gersberg *et al.*, 1989; Kansime and Nalubega, 1999, Kyambadde *et al.*, 2004; Kansime *et al.*, 2005; Kanyiginya and Kansime, 2010). The extent to which the wetlands reduce the impact is the degree or capacity at which they buffer. However, the function depends on the structure/condition and hydrology of wetlands, and the loads of pollutants from the catchment areas (Hammer and Kadlec, 1986; Kadlec and Knight, 1996; Kyambadde *et al.*, 2004). Therefore changes in wetlands ecological functions and attributes can be slow and sometimes difficult to identify within the normal variation of rainfall conditions but may have a long term effect.

### Conclusion and recommendations

The indicated 10% - 20% increased runoff as a result of rainfall variability for most of Uganda (MLWE, 2002) will increase faecal coliforms dynamics in Kinawataka wetland streams. Rain harvesting and proper waste disposal should therefore be priority in the area. Conservation strategies should therefore respond to the changing climate and interactions with other human factors such as landscape design which are expected to affect wetlands ecosystem. This study demonstrates that regression exercise offers the potential to

assess the impact that may arise from changes in the catchment of aquatic systems.

### Acknowledgement

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