

ABSTRACT

From ancient times human settlements and cultures thrived along river valleys which provided water for domestic use as well as agriculture. As population grew, human shaped the river valleys as well as impacted on the water quality. An investigation was carried out during low (January to March 2012) and high (August to October 2012) discharge regimes in the Njoro River to establish whether the river's discharge dictated the visit rate and activities by people and animals at three sites. The study involved counting of people and animals during the day between 1000 – 1300hrs that visited the river, and recording down the activities. The visit rate by people was statistically insignificant between low (30.75 ± 5.64 ind. hr⁻¹) and high (20.58 ± 3.41 ind. hr⁻¹) discharges respectively, ($t = 1.544$, d.f = 70, $p > 0.05$). A similar observation was made in mean visit rates by animals (t -value = 0.725, $p > 0.05$). However, significant differences in the rate of people and animals (pooled data) were evident among the sites during low and high discharge periods (one-way ANOVA, $P < 0.001$). More men fetched water at the most downstream site than women during both discharge regimes, and the opposite was evident at the first site. It is concluded that discharge did not influence significantly the visit rates and other factors that are site specific should be explored. Disturbances in the Njoro River are of press type and requires intervention for the management of this river.

Keywords:

River, visits, disturbance, sites, discharge, people, animals