

LAKE LUA LIVES

BY LAURA VAN BELLE

THIS WEEK THE SCIENCE DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EQUILANO PUBLISHED A SMALL REPORT IN WHICH THEY DISCUSS THE POSSIBILITY OF LIFE IN OUR FAMOUS PINK LAKE. UNTIL NOW SCIENTISTS WERE CONVINCED THAT THERE WAS NO LIFE POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF THE HIGH AMOUNTS OF CARBON DIOXIDE THE LAKE CONTAINS.

It was after taking some samples for a soil investigation researcher Anna Muano discovered the possibility of life. As she was examining samples under a microscope, she saw small particles moving. After further examination, these particles happened to be Plankton.

Plankton are the unseen heroes of a lot of ecosystems. They directly or indirectly provide food to a wide variety of species. There are two types of Plankton. One being Phytoplankton which are plants and one being Zooplankton which are animals. The type Lake of Lua is dealing with are Phytoplankton. However, Anna and her team will take more samples to look for Zooplankton as well.



What is interesting is that Plankton have their own little tasks just like we humans do. Phytoplankton take in carbon dioxide and release oxygen. The good news is that, depending on the amount of plankton, the CO₂ in the water may reduce.

This might make it possible for certain animals and plants to live in it in the future. The sad news is that when the carbon dioxide level drops drastically the pink will lose its intensity. Worst case scenario the lake will no longer be pink by 2050. But we are far from there! The science team will take samples on a regular basis to monitor the situation.

