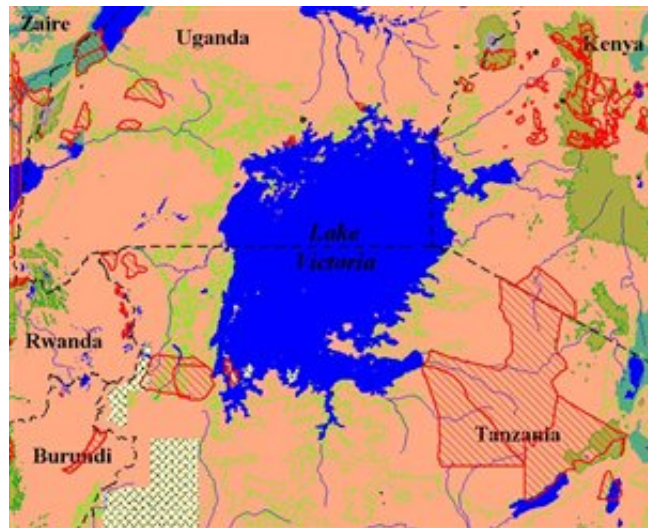


The Victoria Lake, The Amazon River and the Atlantic Ocean

Lake Victoria



Largest lake of Africa and the world's second largest freshwater lake, c.26,830 sq mi (69,490 sq km), E central Africa, on the Uganda-Tanzania-Kenya border. Lake Victoria (c.255 mi/410 km long and c.155 mi/250 km wide) occupies a shallow depression (c.250 ft/75 m deep) on the Equatorial Plateau (alt. 3,725 ft/1,135 m) between two arms of the Great Rift Valley. It has an irregular shoreline and many small islands. Numerous streams, including the Kagera River, feed Lake Victoria, which is one of the chief headwater reservoirs of the Nile; the Victoria Nile drains the lake to the north. At Owen Falls Dam on the Victoria Nile the lake's waters are used to generate hydroelectricity. The lake basin is densely populated and intensely cultivated, and the lake is an important fishery, but fish stocks have declined since the 1980s as a result of overfishing. Ships regularly call at lakeside towns, including Entebbe, Mwanza, Bukoba, and Kisumu. The first European to see Lake Victoria (originally called Ukerewe) was John Speke, the British explorer, in 1858; Henry Stanley explored the region in 1875.

The Amazon River

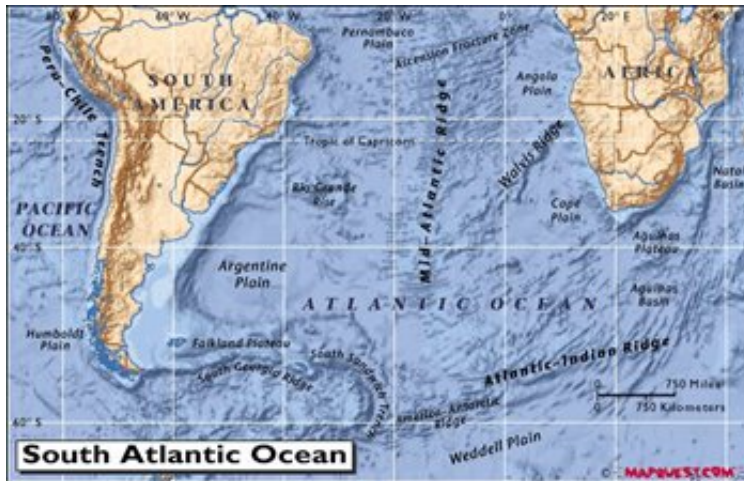


The Amazon is the greatest river in the world by so many measures; the volume of water it carries to the sea (approximately 20% of all the freshwater discharge into the oceans), the area of land that drains into it, and its length and width. It is one of the longest rivers in the world and, depending upon who you talk to, is anywhere between 6,259km/3,903mi and 6,712km/4,195mi long.

For the last century the length of the Amazon and the Nile Rivers have been in a tight battle for title of world's longest river. The exact length of the two rivers varies over time and reputable sources disagree as to their actual length. The Nile River in Africa is reported to be anywhere from at 5,499km/3,437mi to 6,690km/4,180mi long. But there is no question as to which of the two great rivers carries the greater volume of water - the Amazon.

At its widest point the Amazon can be 11km/6.8 mi wide during the dry season. The area covered by the Amazon River and its tributaries more than triples over the course of a year. In an average dry season 110,000 square km of land are water-covered, while in the wet season the flooded area of the Amazon Basin rises to 350,000 square km. When the flood plains and the Amazon River Basin flood during the rainy season the Amazon River can be up to 40km/24.8 mi wide. Where the Amazon opens at its estuary the river is over 325km/202 mi wide!

The Atlantic Ocean



This ocean occupies an elongated, S-shaped basin extending in a north-south direction and is divided into the North Atlantic and South Atlantic by equatorial counter currents at about 8° north latitude. Bounded by North and South America on the west and Europe and Africa on the east, the Atlantic is linked to the Pacific Ocean by the Arctic Ocean on the north and the Drake Passage on the south. An artificial connection between the Atlantic and Pacific is also provided by the Panama Canal. On the east, the dividing line between the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean is the 20° east meridian. The Atlantic is separated from the Arctic Ocean by a line from Greenland to southernmost Svalbard to northern Norway.

Covering approximately 20% of Earth's surface, the Atlantic Ocean is second only to the Pacific in size. With its adjacent seas it occupies an area of about 41,100,000 square miles (106,400,000 km²) without them, it has an area of 31,800,000 mi² (82,400,000 km²). The land area that drains into the Atlantic is four times that of either the Pacific or Indian oceans. The volume of the Atlantic Ocean with its adjacent seas is 354,700,000 km³ (85,100,000 mi³) and without them 323,600,000 km³ (77,640,000 mi³).

The average depth of the Atlantic, with its adjacent seas, is 3,332 m (10,932 ft); without them it is 3,926 m (12,881 ft). The greatest depth, 8,605 m (28,232 ft), is in the Puerto Rico Trench. The width of the Atlantic varies from 2,848 km (1,770 miles) between Brazil and Liberia to about 4,830 km (3,000 miles) between the United States and northern Africa.