

Mediterranean through two main arms and numerous subordinate channels. The lakes in the delta include Lake Mariut, 112 square miles in area, Lake Edku, 104 square miles, Lake Borollos, 266 square miles, and Lake Menzala, 745 square miles, which stand in hollows left by the failure of the river to fill its delta region up to a uniform level. The continual accumulation of fine silt raises the bed and banks of the stream until it flows in a channel a little above the adjoining country; thus a breach made during a flood overthrow diverts it to one side or the other, and in the new course so given the raising process and the breaking away are repeated. The various lines of flow are marked by higher deposits than the intervening spaces, and the interlacing of old channels encloses a very shallow, faintly marked basin.

The most remote head-stream of the Congo is the Chambezi, River Congo. which rises on the western slope of the plateau between Lakes Nyasa and Tanganyika, and flows south-west into the marshy Lake Bangweolo. Near the south point of that lake the river makes its exit through a vast marsh with isolated lakelets. It then turns north through Lake Mweru and descends to the forest-clad basin of western equatorial Africa; traversing this in a majestic northward curve, and receiving vast supplies of water from many great tributaries, it finally turns south-west and cuts a way to the Atlantic Ocean through the western highlands about latitude 6° South (see fig. 74).

Both Mweru and Bangweolo are merely shallow depressions which have been turned into lakes by the Upper Congo.

Lake Bangweolo, 3700 feet above sea-level, is of such uncertain area, owing to its shores being fringed with marsh and overgrown with papyrus, that it is useless to give any guess at the mileage of its open surface, but it must contain, Sir H. Johnston says, at least 1500 square miles of navigable water. The rivers running to it often flow through narrow swamps, many of which seem to have been at one time shallow lakes whose shrunken remains still show at places, like Lake Moir, near Serenji. These small swamps become larger and more frequent as the rivers approach one another, and at last become one vast dead-level morass, which in its north-western part changes from a dense mass of papyrus reeds to a sheet of open water, and is then known as Lake Bangweolo. The lake has covered a much larger area eastwards and up the Lukula, Chambezi, and Mansya Rivers, for the rivers that pour in on its north and east sides have been piling mud in its shallow bed for centuries and extending their deltas into it.

Lake Mweru, 3189 feet above the sea (Lemaire, 1901), is 68 miles long by 24 miles broad.