

# Lakes are de-gassed to avoid mass deaths

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Two African lakes that killed 1,800 people in the 1980s may again release deadly amounts of CO<sub>2</sub>, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor scientists report.

George Kling and colleagues say current preventive efforts are insufficient to prevent another disaster at Lakes Nyos and Monoun in Cameroon.

Since the deadly release of carbon dioxide clouds each lake has been outfitted with a pipe to vent CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere.

The researchers explained the CO<sub>2</sub> is entering the lakes from magma under the Earth's surface.

The team's 12 years of data indicate both lakes have CO<sub>2</sub> saturation values of 80 percent to 90 percent -- indicating each lake's pipe is not enough to dissipate all the gas.

The scientists determined that during the next 10 years, each pipe will only remove approximately 30 percent of the gas, thereby reducing, but not eliminating, the risk of a cloud release.

By modeling past and future CO<sub>2</sub> refill rates, the researchers suggest adding an additional pipe to Lake Monoun and four more to Lake Nyos to prevent another disaster.

The research appears in the early online edition of the Proceedings of

the National Academy of Sciences.

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