



<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/aquifers-found-desert-dry-region-kenya-20231846>

New Aquifers Found in Desert-Dry Region of Kenya

NAIROBI, Kenya September 12, 2013 (AP)

The logo for Associated Press, consisting of the letters 'AP' in a bold, sans-serif font.

Associated Press

A remote region of Kenya that suffers from frequent droughts may soon be flush with water after the discovery of huge underground aquifers.

Two aquifers have been identified in the Turkana region of Kenya by using satellite exploration technology. Three other aquifers have been detected but need to be confirmed through drilling.

Judi Wakhungu, the Cabinet secretary for Kenya's Ministry of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, said that the "newly found wealth of water" opens doors to a more prosperous future for the people of Turkana and the nation.

"The news about these water reserves comes at a time when reliable water supplies are highly needed," Wakhungu said in a statement Wednesday. "We must now work to further explore these resources responsibly and safeguard them for future generations."

Of Kenya's 41 million people, 17 million lack access to safe water, and 28 million do not have adequate sanitation, according to UNESCO. Violence over scarce natural resources frequently break out in the Turkana region.

The discoveries were made near Lake Turkana, the world's largest permanent desert lake and largest alkaline lake. The region has produced a string of ancient paleontological finds connected to humans' earliest days millions of years ago.

The underground lakes were discovered by Radar Technologies International, which said its survey found that the two confirmed Turkana aquifers hold a minimum of 250 billion cubic meters of water, finds it said could boost Kenya's share of available water by 17 percent.

RTI said the three other unconfirmed aquifers could hold another 30 billion cubic meters of water. Drilling will confirm the existence of those three masses of water.

"This groundwater raises the prospect for improving the livelihoods of the Turkana people, most of whom live in poverty and have limited access to basic services and clean water," said RTI, which detects water using satellite data, oil exploration technologies and conventional hydrogeological techniques.

The finding demonstrates how "science and technology can contribute to industrialization and economic growth, and to resolving real societal issues like access to water," said Gretchen Kalonji, UNESCO's assistant director-general for natural sciences.