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The Great Lakes of Turkana – a Novel Perspective on the African Humid Period

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The Lake Turkana region in northern Kenya and southern Ethiopia is famous for its fossil richness including key sites for human evolution studies. Modern Lake Turkana is the last of numerous mega-paleo-lakes, that has persisted to dry up completely at the end of the last African Humid Period (AHP, 15 – 5 ka). The adjacent paleo-lakes Suguta (2,000 km²) and Chew Bahir (2,500 km²), which are desiccated today, have formed together with paleo-lake Turkana (20,000 km²) a N-S oriented mega-lake during the AHP that has been separated only by small morphological Barriers. While Turkana, Suguta and Chew Bahir have been part of intensive research during the past decades, paleo-lake Chalbi with 10,000 km² in size just 10 km east of Lake Turkana was out of sight for most archaeologists and geoscientist. Here we present the first attempts for enhancing our understanding of the paleoenvironmental consequences of paleo-lake Chalbi close to one of the key regions in human evolution.