Degssing of Lake Monoun (Cameroon) launched

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Follow-up surveys of Lakes Nyos and Monoun (Cameroon) which exploded in the mid 1980s killing about 1800 people, indicate that temperature, total dissolved ions, and CO2 concentration in the bottom water of both lakes have been increasing since the last explosions. Lake Monoun is strongly stratified with three distinct layers separated by clear chemoclines at 25, 55 and 94 m depth. The deep layer (55-94 m) is well mixed. Below 94 m, temperature, electric conductivity and CO2 concentration increase sharply towards the bottom, suggesting the source of CO2 supply at the bottom. The highest CO2 concentration of ~160 mmol/kg occurs between 65-95 m depth. The CO2 concentration at 55 m corresponds to 87% of the saturation, and this suggests a high possibility of recurrence of the limnic explosion. Funded by the USAID-OFDA and Cameroonian Government, a permanent degassing pipe was installed at Lake Monoun in January-February 2003. The degassing system, similar to the one installed at Lake Nyos in 2001, is now functional and is expected to reduce the danger of recurrence of gas explosion. The current situation at Lake Nyos will also be reported.