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FACTSHEET

Management plan for the Lake Nasser fishery



Background

Lake Nasser is a vast reservoir that extends from southern Egypt into northern Sudan, where it is known as Lake Nubia. At around 480 km long, up to 18 km across and with a surface area of more than 5,000 km², it is one of the largest artificial lakes in the world.

The lake was formed as a result of the construction of the Aswan High Dam on the Nile River in the 1960s. The dam was built to control flooding, store floodwater to release during the dry season and generate electricity.

The lake consists of a main channel and inlets or side extensions called *khors*. Most fishing activities take place 5.4–7.9 thousand km from the shore, depending on the lake's water level, which ranges from 160 to 180 m above sea level (Van Zwieten et al. 2011; Halls et al. 2015). There are four landing sites along the lake: Aswan in the north, Garf Hussein in the middle, and Abu Simbel and the newly constructed Tushka in the south.

Key facts

Project name: Youth Employment in Aswan Governorate: Extension of Fisheries and Aquaculture Interventions

Project duration: 2017–2018

Donor: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

Partners: General Authority for Fish Resources and Development (GAFRD) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation



Figure 1. Lake Nasser and its location in Egypt.

Fish production in Lake Nasser

Until 1998, fish production from Lake Nasser had increased steadily over the years to more than 50,000 metric tons. Production then began to decline, and by 2016 it had dropped to less than 19,000 metric tons (GAFRD 2018). About half of the lake's fish production is consumed in Upper Egypt (Aswan and neighboring governorates), while the other half goes to El-Obour market to be consumed in and around Cairo (Nasr-Allah et al. 2016).

The lake is divided into fishing zones, which are allocated to one company and four fisheries associations: Misr Aswan Company, Aswan Sons Cooperative Society, Fishermen Cooperative Society (Mother), Nubian Cooperative Society and El-Takamol Cooperative Society.

Key facts

Total income: EGP 5.4 million per year (between 2014 and 2016)

Employment opportunities: More than 15,000 fishers using over 3000 boats operate on the lake

Main species: Tilapia (67%), pebbly fish (18%), Nile perch (8%) and tiger fish (6%)

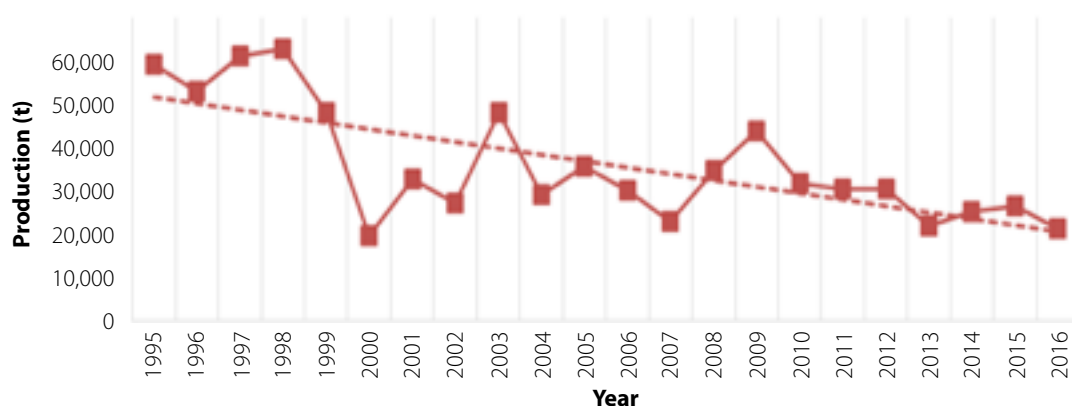


Figure 2. Development of fish production in Lake Nasser from 1995 to 2016 (GAFRD 2018).



Lake Nasser management plan

Fish from Lake Nasser are an important source of animal protein in Upper Egypt. However, stocks are overfished and catches are decreasing. In 2017, WorldFish, as part of the Youth Employment in Aswan Governorate: Extension of Fisheries and Aquaculture Interventions project, conducted a stock assessment study to gather information and data to develop a fishery management plan.

The plan was developed according to the ecosystem approach to fisheries, which takes the wider ecosystem, its interactions with fisheries and the interests of other stakeholders into consideration. The plan is intended to:

- Revitalize the Lake Nasser fishery to increase production to the maximum sustainable yield.
- Improve governance of the fishery.
- Maximize the social and economic benefits for the fishing community.

Management measures

To ensure the sustainability of fishery activities in Lake Nasser, the management plan includes the following recommendations:

- Develop a landing observation system; improve the accuracy of fish statistics; revise fish landing tariffs; restrict fish landings to ports; increase net mesh size and ensure the use of legal fishing gear.
- Enforce the regulations related to legal mesh sizes and fishing licenses.
- Release Nile tilapia fingerlings to maintain stocks; establish nursery areas; implement a closed season (15 March–15 May).
- Allocate the necessary resources in official budgets to implement the management plan.
- Provide training courses for observers/specialized courses for cooperative supervisors.



Photo credit: Sara Fouad/WorldFish

Fish cages to catch Nile tilapia in a natural reservoir in Wadi El-Saayda, Aswan, Egypt.

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