

Egypt's shrinking 'Pharaonic Sea' has fishermen worried

June 18 2018



A fish is caught in a net on June 16, 2018, at Egypt's Pharaonic Sea, about 80 kilometres (50 miles) north of Cairo

Egypt's shrinking freshwater "Pharaonic Sea" has residents in its nearly 50 surrounding fishing villages worried.

The thin 10,000-square kilometre stretch of water just north of the capital was once part of the Nile River, but shrivelling shorelines have left it separated from the country's main water source for nearly 50 years.

Since then, inhabitants in the surrounding villages have referred to it as the "dead sea".

And while its surrounding lush vegetation remains, the sea's steadily declining water levels have fishermen on edge.

The worry has fuelled anxious meetings regularly held by fishermen.

In the [village](#) of Kafr Fisha, families live in rhythm with the sea in houses built along the water's edge.

Like dozens of other [fishermen](#), Sherif, 41, and Khaled, 55, are out of the house and onto the water before dawn.

They spend their day on a tiny wooden boat, casting handmade nets into the sea's brownish green waters.

Dressed in jeans and a sleeveless shirt under the hot summer sun, Sherif carefully frees fish from the nets, placing each one into a small plastic crate.

As the sun begins to dip below the horizon, Khaled sits at the water's [edge](#) and prepares a traditional Egyptian salad that will accompany their dinner of fresh grilled catch.



An Egyptian Fisherman removes fish from a net on his boat in the waters of the Pharaonic Sea

They make tea as night falls, lying on the ground and enjoying a respite from the day's heat.

The Nile's steadily dipping shorelines have both villagers and officials worried.

The country relies almost entirely on the river for irrigation and drinking [water](#), and authorities are worried a controversial upstream dam underway in neighbouring Ethiopia could dramatically reduce its flow.



An Egyptian fisherman prepares a meal next to the Pharaonic Sea



An Egyptian fisherman handles a net on his boat in the waters of the Pharaonic Sea on June 16, 2018

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