



Our Changing Climate

Drying Up of Lake Chad

Over the last 30 years Lake Chad in central Africa has shrunk to one twentieth its former size. Considered a deep wetland, Lake Chad was once the second largest wetland in Africa with a lakebed no more than 5-8m (16-26 ft) deep. A recent study attributes the 30 per cent loss of lake area between the decades of 1956-1965 and 1966-1975 primarily to long term climate variability. The study shows only 5 per cent

of the lake area lost during this period resulted from water management practices. Between the 1960s and the 1990s the study shows a further 45 per cent loss of the Lake's surface area. During this time period half of the loss is attributed to a continued decrease in precipitation; the remaining half is due to a large increase in irrigated agriculture.