



# Water

## Lake Hamoun, Iran

Iran's Lake Hamoun is fed primarily by water catchments in neighboring Afghanistan. In 1976, when rivers in Afghanistan were flowing regularly, the amount of water in the lake was relatively high. Between 1999 and 2001, however, the lake all but dried up and disappeared, as can be seen in the 2001 satellite image above. The "dry phase" of Lake Hamoun is a striking example of how competition for scarce water resources can transform a landscape. When droughts occur in Afghanistan, or the water in watersheds that support Lake Hamoun is drawn down by other natural or human-induced

reasons, the end result is a dry lakebed in Iran. In addition, when the lake is dry, seasonal winds blow fine sands off the exposed lakebed. The sand is swirled into huge dunes that may cover a hundred or more fishing villages along the former lakeshore. Wildlife around the lake is negatively impacted and fisheries are brought to a halt. Changes in water policies and substantial rains in the region saw a return of much of the water in Lake Hamoun by 2003.