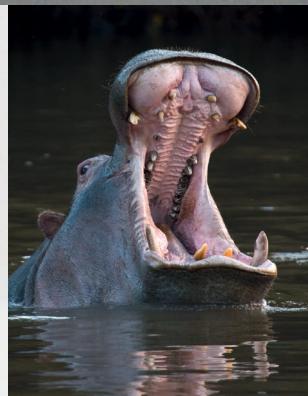


The project region Lake Tana and its surroundings

A unique habitat

Located in north-western Ethiopia, the Lake Tana watershed with its innumerable rivers and wetlands, its 3,000 square kilometers lake, numerous forest islands, and the breath-taking Nile Falls, is a biodiversity hotspot. The region has global significance as an important habitat for aquatic and migratory birds.

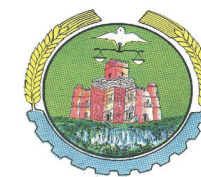


Hippopotamuses, crocodiles, monitor lizards, rare fish, and nearly 300 bird species live in Lake Tana's surroundings.



“For People and Nature: Establishment of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve at Lake Tana in Ethiopia”

Supported within the framework of important development oriented projects of private German NGOs in developing countries out of the fund assets, Energy and Climate Funds' of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)



The Ethiopian-Orthodox buildings from the 13th to 17th centuries fascinate visitors with their mural paintings, tombs, and the regalia of former kings.

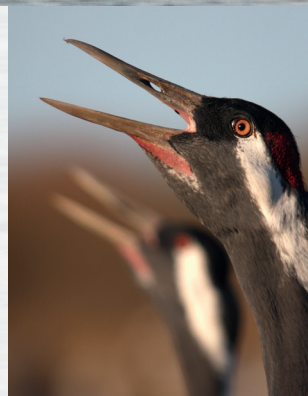


Islands of cultural treasures

Starting in the 14th century, the Lake Tana region played an important part as a haven of Christianity and the birthplace of a dynasty whose roots trace back to King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Around Lake Tana and on 20 of its 37 islands, churches have guarded cultural treasures for many centuries.

A birds paradise

The marshes and shallow-water areas of the lake are crucial habitats for many European migratory bird species including the northern pintail, the northern shoveller and the black-tailed godwit. Rare bird species like the wattled crane, the lesser jacana, and the endemic yellow-fronted parrot also breed here.



The crane, a familiar sight at European farm land and marshes, makes its winter home at Lake Tana. If this unique region were destroyed, the crane would lose its wintering grounds forever.



Further information

NABU
Charitéstraße 3
10117 Berlin
Germany
phone + 49 (0)30-28 49 84-0
fax + 49 (0)30-28 49 84-20 00
International@NABU.de
www.NABU.de/International

Michael Succow Foundation
Ellernholzstr. 1/3
17489 Greifswald
Germany
phone + 49(0)3834-835 42-0
fax + 49(0)3834-835 42-22
Info@succow-stiftung.de
www.succow-stiftung.de



www.LakeTana-people-nature.com | www.LakeTana-biosphere.com



Protecting Ethiopia's Largest Lake

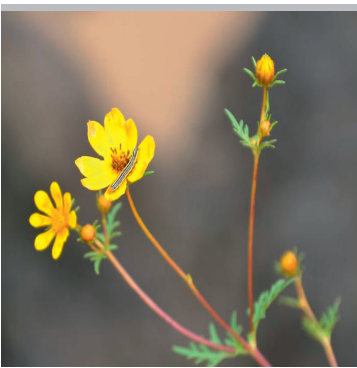
A project supporting the establishment of a UNESCO biosphere reserve at Lake Tana in cooperation with the Michael Succow Foundation



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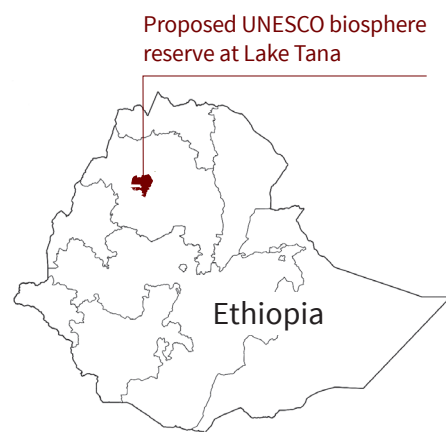
Protecting and developing the Lake Tana region



For the future of Lake Tana

Lake Tana in north-western Ethiopia is the largest lake of the country and the source area of the Blue Nile River. This fertile region with a cultural history going back thousands of years blends natural and cultural heritage in a unique way. Solemn monasteries and churches have grown around the lake, and many rare animal and plant species use the waters and its surrounding wetlands as a habitat. Unfortunately, the area is threatened by intense resource use, pollution, large-scale agricultural interventions and urbanization.

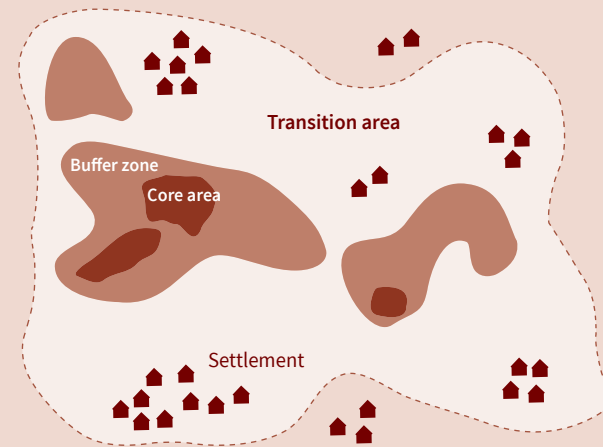
Through the project 'For People and Nature: Establishment of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve at Lake Tana in Ethiopia' NABU, the Michael Succow Foundation, and the Government of Ethiopia are working to establish a biosphere reserve that will safeguard the long-term conservation of valuable ecosystems and offer new sources of income for the local people. The project is funded by Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and anchored in a project agreement between NABU and of Ethiopia's Amhara National Regional State.



Project staff at NABU's Project Office in Bahir Dar

Introduction to the Project

The project which runs for four years (2012-2015) focuses on establishing a UNESCO biosphere reserve. Registered as non-governmental organization, NABU acts as the project implementer in cooperation with the Michael Succow Foundation, the regional government Bureau of Agriculture, Bureau of Culture, Tourism and Parks Development, Bureau of Environmental Protection, Land Administration and Use, Bureau of Water Resources Development and partners like Bahir Dar University, Organization for Rehabilitation and Development Amhara and Amhara Region Agricultural Research Institute.



Example for a zonation of a biosphere reserve

UNESCO's biosphere reserve concept

Biosphere reserves are natural and cultural landscapes that UNESCO recognises as model regions for sustainable development. Their goal is to strike a balance between conservation and use, because people depend on intact ecosystems and their 'services'. Every biosphere reserve consists of three zones: strictly protected core zones, buffer zones with restricted land use, and extensive development zones. There are currently more than 600 biosphere reserves in more than 100 countries.

Deforestation, erosion and poverty

Imminent danger

Tana Lake and its wetlands are of immense ecological value and provide the means of existence for millions of people. Continuous human encroachment in this sensitive habitat is creating increasing environmental harms. Of the original forest cover only patches around churches and monasteries remain. Intensive agriculture has caused heavy soil erosion. Several species of animals and plants have already disappeared while the last wetlands and forests are still shrinking.



Even now, the majority of the local people lives in poverty and has no choice but to overuse their natural environment for survival. In addition to smallholder farming, the government has declared the region an Economic Growth Corridor. The development of irrigation and other infrastructure, of a hydropower plant, and of export-oriented farming will lead to a further intensification of agriculture, an influx of migrants, and a deterioration of water quality. Unless mitigation measures will be enforced, these changes bear considerable risks for the downstream riparian states of the Blue Nile River.



Prospects for people and nature

Conserving habitats

NABU, the Ethiopian government, and the local communities are collaborating to protect valuable natural areas and to develop the region sustainably by means of establishing a UNESCO biosphere reserve by

- conducting all-embracing information campaigns on UNESCO biosphere reserves,
- identifying and designating the core, buffer, and development zones together with the local communities,
- facilitating a biosphere reserve administration with the responsible governmental authority,
- developing and implementing a biosphere reserve management plan,
- preparing an application for official recognition by UNESCO, and
- supporting data collection, analysis, and research.

Sustainable use of natural resources

Overexploitation of natural and agricultural areas need to be restored, and their future use needs to be regulated in a way that secures the stability and usability of the ecosystem. To this purpose, the project, together with the local people and other stakeholders, will

- create conservation and land-use plans for wetlands and church forests,
- create 200 hectare of forest as corridors between forest islands, thereby increasing the total forest area by 25 percent,
- introduce soil-friendly conservation agriculture,
- distribute energy-saving stoves, and
- promote bee-keeping.

Promoting regional development

Due to its volcanic soils and the huge lake, Tana region is extraordinarily fertile. Yet the better part of the population lives in poverty. NABU and its project partners work for an ecologically sustainable development of the region by promoting

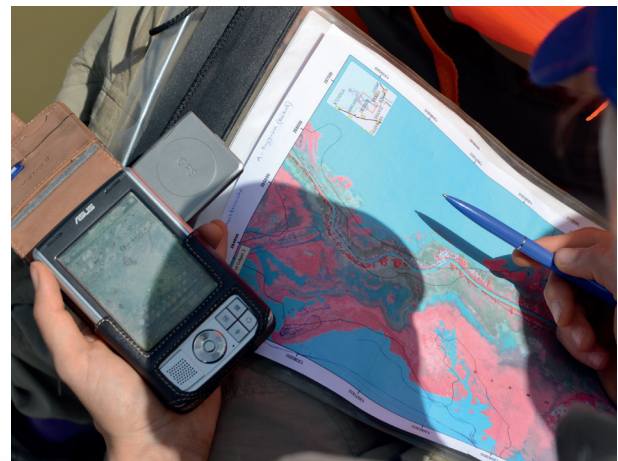
- the production of regional products for Ethiopian cities and tourism hotspots, and
- eco-tourism in the region.

What has been accomplished so far

Since 2006, NABU and its partners at the German government, in business, and among non-government organisations have been supporting biosphere reserves in Ethiopia. These efforts proved successful when, in 2010, UNESCO recognised the first two Ethiopian biosphere reserves.

NABU's successful cooperation with the Ethiopian authorities led to a trilateral agreement with Ethiopia's Ministry of Science and Technology and UNESCO. Under this agreement, NABU advises the Government of Ethiopia in establishing additional biosphere reserves, supported by competent partners like the Michael Succow Foundation.

The Ethiopian National Committee for Man and the Biosphere designated the Lake Tana region as one of the most promising sites for a new biosphere reserve. Subsequently, the Michael Succow Foundation in close collaboration with the regional government prepared a feasibility study of a 'Lake Tana Biosphere Reserve' and evaluated its realisation. In 2012, NABU opened a project office with six employees in Bahir Dar, the



Data collection in the project region

regional capital at the shores of Lake Tana. A broad information campaign has been run since the start of the project to familiarise government officials and experts with UNESCO's concept and to pave the way for a smooth collaboration with the local authorities. At the same time, the mapping and zoning of the area, awareness raising in the local communities and structures for effective administration were initiated.

