

Satellite

NEW WATER AT EL FAIYUM

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One of the most distinct features on satellite imagery of Egypt is the El Faiyum depression or "Leaf" just south of Cairo and the Nile Delta and west of the Nile River.

On the northwest portion of the depression (believed to be formed by ablation of desert wind erosion) is Lake Birket Quaron which is 45 meters below sea level. The area adjacent to this lake is under cultivation.

Examining DMSP photos in 1973, a small lake appears west of El Faiyum but Landsat photos (1976-1977) reveal no lake. In a January 1984 DMSP photo, two small lakes appear west of the depression. (See Figure 1) These lakes were probably caused by heavy rainfall.

The importance of these lakes to cultivation is obvious. The weather photo of 1984 shows areas of persistent water collection that Egypt desperately needs to preserve. Weather photos do, indeed, show more than weather!

