

Incredible Shrinking Lake

Photos from space tell the story.

Purpose: To compare views of Lake Chad over time

Length: 10 minutes

Materials: The two comparison pictures of Lake Chad

Divide students into teams and pass out the pictures of Lake Chad to each team. Teams should make observations of each picture, compare the pictures, and make inferences about what might have caused any changes.

Encourage teams to think about:

- What are the features in the pictures?
- What is similar in these pictures? What is different?
- What caused the difference?
- What impact will the change in lake size have on the area?
- What will happen if the change continues?
- If you didn't have photos from space, how could you measure Lake Chad?

Each team then shares its observations and inferences.

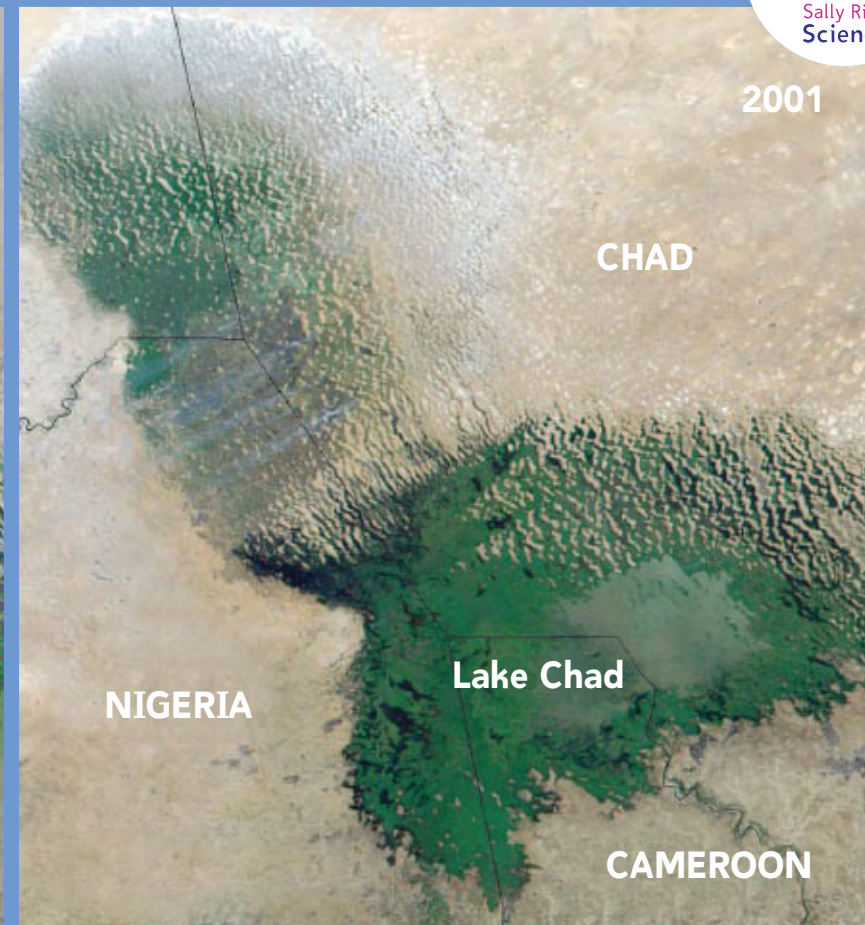
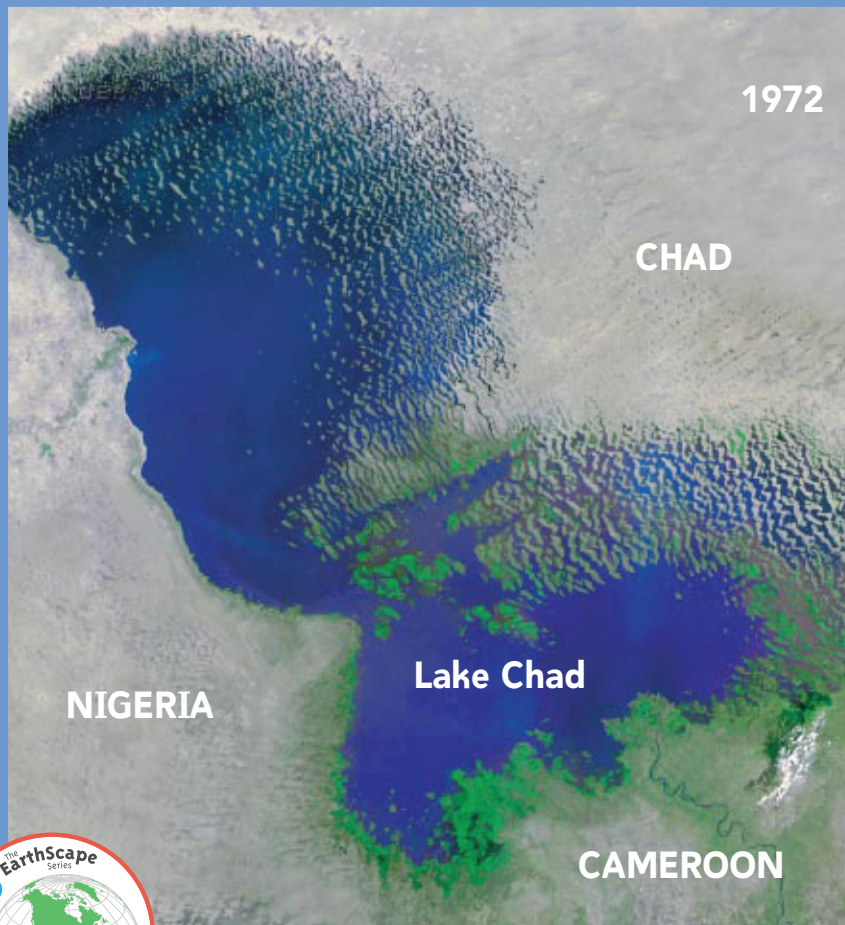
Going Down, Down

Lake Chad in Northern Africa is a freshwater lake that was once the size of Lake Erie. Because of a long drought in that part of the world, people and animals have to depend on the lake for water far more than they did before. The amount of water taken from the lake has quadrupled in the last 25 years. Today, Lake Chad is just a shadow of its former self—one-twentieth the size it was in the 1960s. Soon it may have to be renamed Pond Chad.

(from Sally Ride Science's *Earth's Precious Resources: Clean Water*, p. 25)



Incredible Shrinking Lake: Lake Chad



These satellite photos show that one of the world's great lakes is disappearing. North Africa's Lake Chad has shriveled to five percent of its normal size.

Image credit: United Nations Environment Programme