

Migratory birds? What about migratory fish?

- By Ato Abebe Getahun and Obaka Torto



The march in the middle of the city (Photo: Abebe Getahun/Addis Abeba University)

Major 'International Days for...' play a strong role in supporting the work of conservation networks. There is the [International Day for Biological Diversity](#), the [World Environment Day](#), and of course [World Migratory Bird Day](#). Now, there is also [World Fish Migration Day](#)!

The [Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund \(CEPF\)](#) under its [Eastern Afromontane Hotspot programme](#) is funding a project in Ethiopia, implemented by the Addis Abeba University, to empower local fishing communities to sustainably utilize and conserve the (migratory) fish resources of Lake Tana. Lake Tana is an Afromontane Key Biodiversity Area as well as an Important Bird Area.

As part of that project, Addis Abeba University supported the first ever [World Fish Migration Day](#) which was celebrated colourfully at the city of Bahir Dar, near the Lake, on Saturday, 24 May 2014. Thousands of people marched on the streets of Bahir Dar voicing the conservation importance of the migratory fish and - specifically - the world's only remaining *Labeobarbus* species flock of [Lake Tana](#).

Abebe Getahun, Addis Abeba University's manager of the Lake Tana project, described the day. "There were brief talks at the beginning of the march marking the day and its official opening, and there was a seminar with a discussion at the end, during which three papers relevant to fish biodiversity conservation were selected and presented. Thousands of leaflets were prepared in the local language and distributed to the public. Banners were also displayed at selected strategic sites in the city. The march was accompanied by the Police Marsh, which

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provided more visibility to the public and policy makers. Several local and international organizations were involved in sponsoring the event."

Zewditu Tessema, the CEPF Eastern Afromontane Hotspot project officer in Ethiopia, based at the Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society (EWNHS, BirdLife in Ethiopia) congratulated the organisers of the event by saying: "This is a good starting point which will have an immense contribution towards the creation of awareness on the conservation of fish species in Ethiopia. Addis Ababa University and the donors are pioneers for the celebration of World Fish Migration Day in Ethiopia." She continued: "I



(Photo: Abebe Getahun/Addis Abeba University)

also congratulate CEPF for creating a legacy for this event, the first of its kind in Ethiopia, and I hope the celebrations will continue, and be marked at a national level with many more awareness creation programmes such as [EWNHS](#)'s own efforts during the celebration of [World Environment Day](#)."

The Lake Tana project runs from January 2014 to June 2015.

BirdLife International, together with IUCN and the Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society, form the Regional Implementation Team that supports CEPF with their investment in the Eastern Afromontane Hotspot.

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