

Loss of fisheries from destruction of the Kakhovka reservoir

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Destruction of the Kakhovka dam in June 2023 was a catastrophe for aquatic life and 42 species of fish, including 20 of commercial value. The catch and sale of fish from the Kakhovka reservoir provided 22% of the freshwater fish in the Ukrainian market; more than 11 000 tonnes of fish were lost in a few days and the loss of commercial catch is estimated at 2 585 tonnes, worth up to \$5.4 million per year. Almost all spawning sites and feeding areas have been destroyed; damage to infrastructure amounting to about \$270 million needs to be repaired to restore fisheries ecosystem services. Two months after the collapse of the dam, the area of the disinterred Dnipro River bed is about 120 km² (5.5% of the total volume of the reservoir); isolated shallow water bodies occupy some 307 km² but continue to shrink by evaporation and drainage so preservation of any aquatic bioresources there is unlikely.

KEYWORDS: aquatic bioresources, fisheries, environmental and economic losses.