

Abijatta-Shalla National Park is a national park in Ethiopia. It is located in the Oromia Region and the Ethiopian Highlands region, 200 kilometers south of Addis Ababa, and east of the Batu–Shashamane highway.

It contains 887 square kilometers including the Rift Valley lakes of Abijatta and Shalla. The two lakes are separated by three kilometers of hilly land. The altitude of the park ranges from 1540 to 2075 meters, the highest peak being Mount Fike, which is situated between the two lakes.

Besides the two lakes, the primary attraction of this national park are a number of hot springs on the northeast corner of Lake Abijatta, and large numbers of flamingoes on the lake.[1] Care must be exercised in driving vehicles out to the edge of this lake, as the thin crust of dried mud on the surface can give way without warning.

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History[edit]

Although its intent was to protect wildlife, few wild animals currently can be viewed there. During the tumultuous period of the last days of the Derg regime, and for some time afterwards, large numbers of nomads took advantage of weakened central authority to move into the Park and set up residence with their livestock. Much of the Acacia woodland surrounding Lake Abijatta has been cut down for charcoal. Currently, not only do small groups continue to fell Acacia trees, but they go as far as to remove the salty soil from the lake shoreline and sell it.[2]

A recent visitor noted that while viable breeding populations of greater kudu, Grant's gazelle, black-backed jackal and spotted hyena may exist, he saw no evidence of their presence. Although baboons are still quite common, they were outnumbered by the livestock introduced by cattle herders. A few Grant's gazelle and several ostriches were kept in a fenced enclosure near the gate house. Nevertheless, more than 300 bird species have been recorded in Abijatta-Shalla or the remnants of the adjacent park-like woodland.[1]

Reportedly, rehabilitation of this National Park had begun in 1996, and plans for active integration of local communities in its future planning and development had been announced.[2] Other animals in the park are Hippo, Crocodile, Lion, Giraffe, Leopard, Zebra, Warthog, Hyena, Egyptian Geese and Cheetah.

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