

'No Porto Fayoum' petition now online

The campaign to save Lake Quaran and Gebel Qatrani in Egypt from a proposed tourist development 'Porto Fayoum' has increased since we [first reported the news](#) in May. Groups including Nature Conservation Egypt (BirdLife's Affiliate in Egypt) have launched an online petition and Facebook campaign. Please join the campaign and sign the petition [here](#). "You can get regular updates by joining the [No Porto Fayoum Facebook](#) page," said Mindy Baha El Din, of Nature Conservation Egypt. Whilst some in government claim that the green light for the development was given by archaeology officials this is refuted by Zahi Hawass, Head of the Supreme Council for Antiquities in an interview he gave to the Reuters News Agency earlier this month. If it goes ahead, Porto Fayoum will wreak untold destruction on a priceless natural and cultural heritage site. Nature Conservation Egypt (NCE) and the signatories of this petition are calling on the Egyptian government to:

- 1) Rescind this illicit land deal and return this land to the Egyptian people.
- 2) Abolish all TDA jurisdiction in the Lake Qarun Protected Area and return the land to the Ministry of Environment's Nature Conservation Sector, responsible for Egypt's Protected Areas.
- 3) Declare the northern part of Lake Qarun Egypt's to be first UNESCO Geopark.
- 4) Take steps to protect this area's rich natural and cultural heritage by developing the Geopark's management and infrastructure, turning it into a genuine ecotourism attraction for Fayoum oasis and Egypt.
- 5) Undertake the necessary measures and procedures to declare the Gebel Qatrani Geopark as a UNESCO World Heritage Site to bring recognition to this area of global importance.