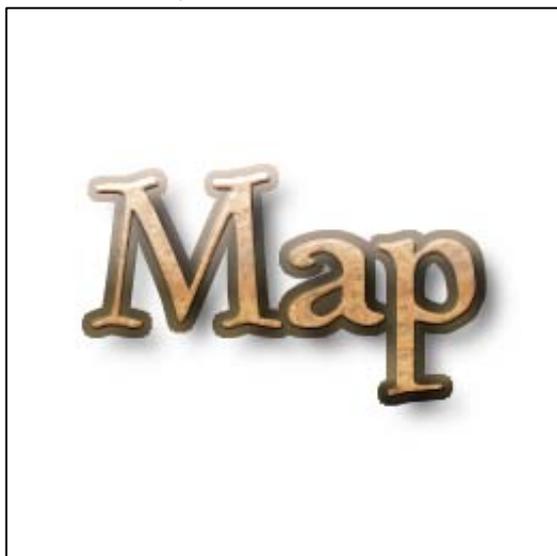


LAKE ELD

Lake Eld is the largest body of sweet water south of the Elder Forest and lies between the River Arden and the Western Hills. The lake has no major influx of fresh water, yet its water stand has been constant, even in times of drought.

It is known for its crystal clear water and the fact that its true depth is unknown. Several attempts to reach the ground in the center of the lake have been unsuccessful and several divers have been lost. For now any new tries have been postponed.

There are several small settlements of fishers around the shore of the lake, but with the close by Elder Forest the area is far from safe. The empire does not see these settlements as important enough to station a unit here, but patrolling Imperial Guards have been known to visit them periodically, to take care of recurring problems that could not be solved by the fishermen themselves.



LIFE AND SOCIETY

The life in the fishing villages can be considered normal. The northern shore is mainly used by barbarian tribes who try to better their food supplies during the warm months. They live in temporary dwellings mainly consisting of tents and jurts. Besides normal fishing boats there are a couple of larger serpent ships that are used to hunt the large sea serpents of the lake, which dwell in its unfathomable depths. Fortunately these beasts seem to leave the shore settlements alone, but sometimes boats just vanish.

The southern shore is mainly settled by humans. Dwellings ranging from stilt

houses build into the lake to sturdy stone and timber buildings along its shore. Most human settlements have a leader that is elected from among the people.

The barbarians on the other hand are lead by captains, who commandeer the separate serpent ships. All smaller fishing boats are attached to one of the bigger ships, who are normally owned by a clan, and tribes sometimes having several of these. During a harsh winter when the lake freezes over, the barbarians sometimes attach outriggers and blades to their ships and sail them over the lake to the breathing holes of the sea serpents.

MAJOR GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

Black Water Shore: Located along the eastern shore of Lake Eld this is an area where the normally crystal clear water of the lake turns into an ominous black. Visibility underwater is almost non existent. The water itself seems not be tainted though,

as a multitude of fishes, fowl and animals life there. Still barbarians as well as all other intelligent races tend to avoid the area.

The Blood Cliff: Rising above the northern shore of Lake Eld is the Blood Cliff, an almost 300' tall rock formation that drops horizontally on the lake side. This is the site of a massacre almost 500 years ago. All members of the barbarian Leaping Trout clan were put to the sword, after their leader betrayed and murdered his wolvern allies. Five packs of wolvern

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descended upon the tribe and herded them up the cliff; all died either in the struggle or were driven off the cliff and drowned.

REGIONAL HISTORY

