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Libya faced a new environmental challenge on July 9, 2024, with a fire incident reported in the Al Wahat District. This incident adds to the country's ongoing struggle with tree cover loss, which has seen a fluctuating trend over the past two decades. Despite a vast land area of over 161 million hectares, Libya's tree cover is minimal, with just over 6,833 hectares.

An analysis of historical data reveals that the highest tree cover loss occurred in 2013, with over 81 hectares affected. However, the overall trend shows a positive net change in tree cover, with a gain of approximately 1,499 hectares against a loss of 663 hectares. This results in a net positive change of around 836 hectares, indicating a recovery rate of about 3.48%.

Shifting agriculture has been identified as a significant driver of tree cover loss, particularly in the early 2000s. The data shows a peak in tree cover loss due to shifting agriculture in 2013, with over 75 hectares lost. Since then, the impact of shifting agriculture on tree cover loss has declined.

The latest fire incident, while isolated, is a reminder of the environmental vulnerabilities faced by Libya. With tree cover being a critical component of the ecosystem, efforts to manage and mitigate such incidents are essential for the country's environmental health and sustainability.

