Monitoring of changes in the area of water surface and wetlands within the Small Aral Sea

SIC experts keep regular monitoring over the Small Aral Sea by using the Landsat 8,9 images. The areas of wetlands and open water surfaces, and dried territories were determined by the image dated May 2, 2026 (Fig. 1). The Figure 2 shows the dynamics of the Syr Darya River runoff based on in-flow to the Small Aral Sea.

Figure 1. Small Aral Sea, Landsat 8 (May 2, 2026)

Table

Areas of wetlands, water surface, and dried areas of the Small Aral Sea (ha)

	23.11.2025	**16.03.2026**	**24.04.2026**	**02.05.2026**
Wetland	52413	54703	55103	57531
Water surface	299410	309367	309986	311239
Dry land	189624	177377	176358	172677
Inflow from Syrdarya River* (mln m^3)	**October**	**February**	**March**	**April**
	35	149	200	241

* Kazhydromet data

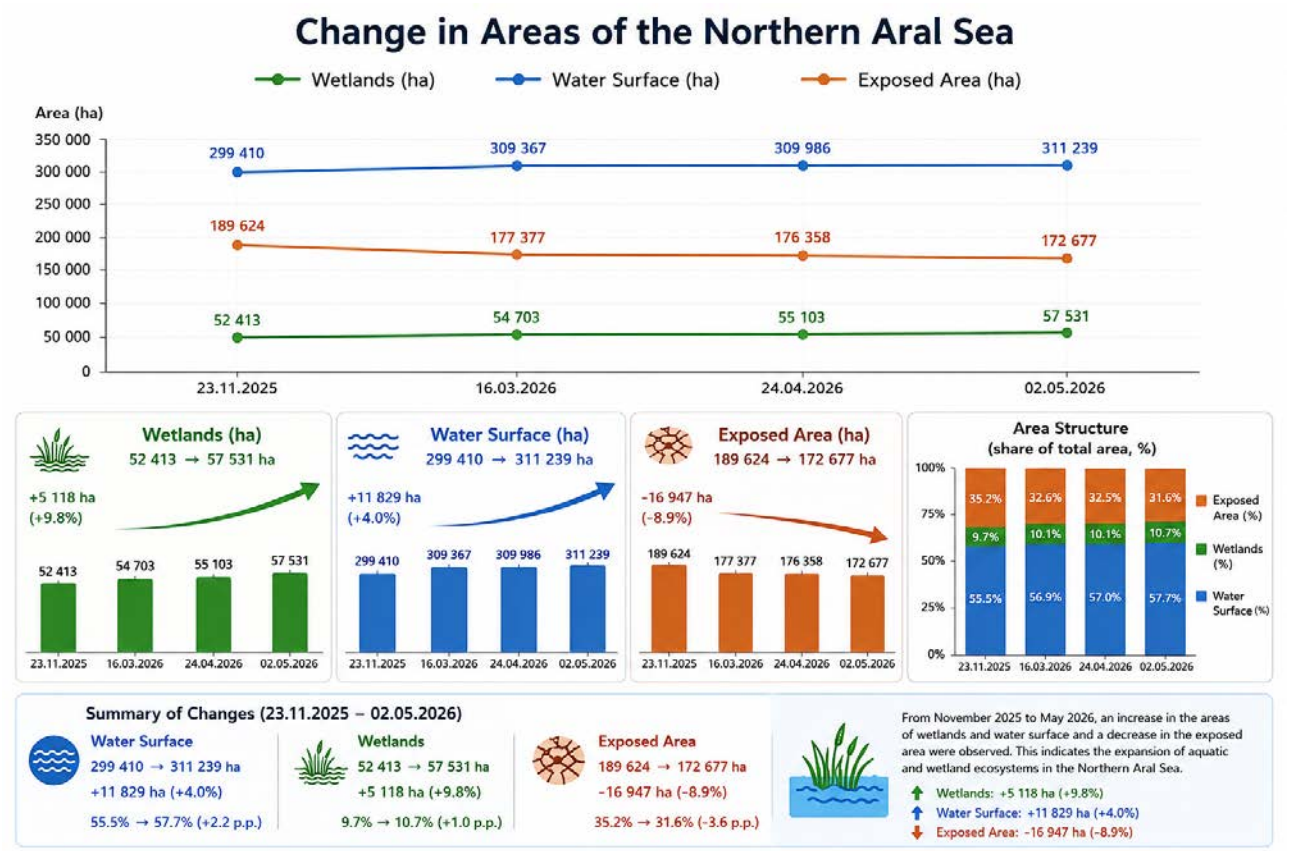
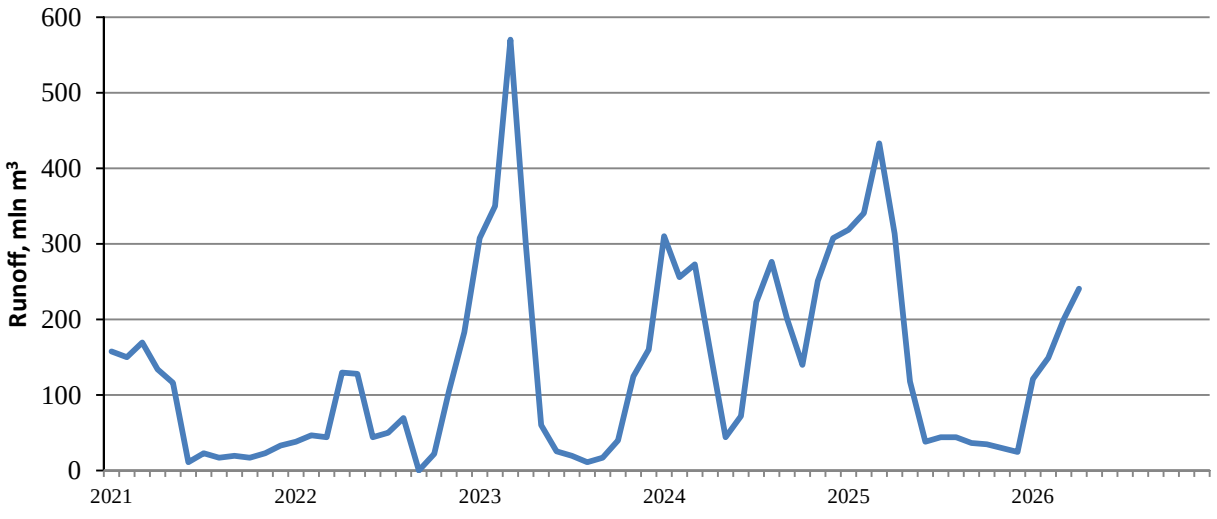


Figure 2. Dynamics of the Syr Darya river flow along the Karateren gauging station



The water surface area of the North Aral Sea increased by 1,872 ha between mid-March 2026 and May 2026, reaching 311.2 thousand ha. The most notable increase occurred in early spring and was associated with higher inflows from the Syr Darya River. While the inflow amounted to 35 million m³ in October 2025, it increased to 241 million m³ by April 2026, significantly influencing the hydrological regime of the water body.

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