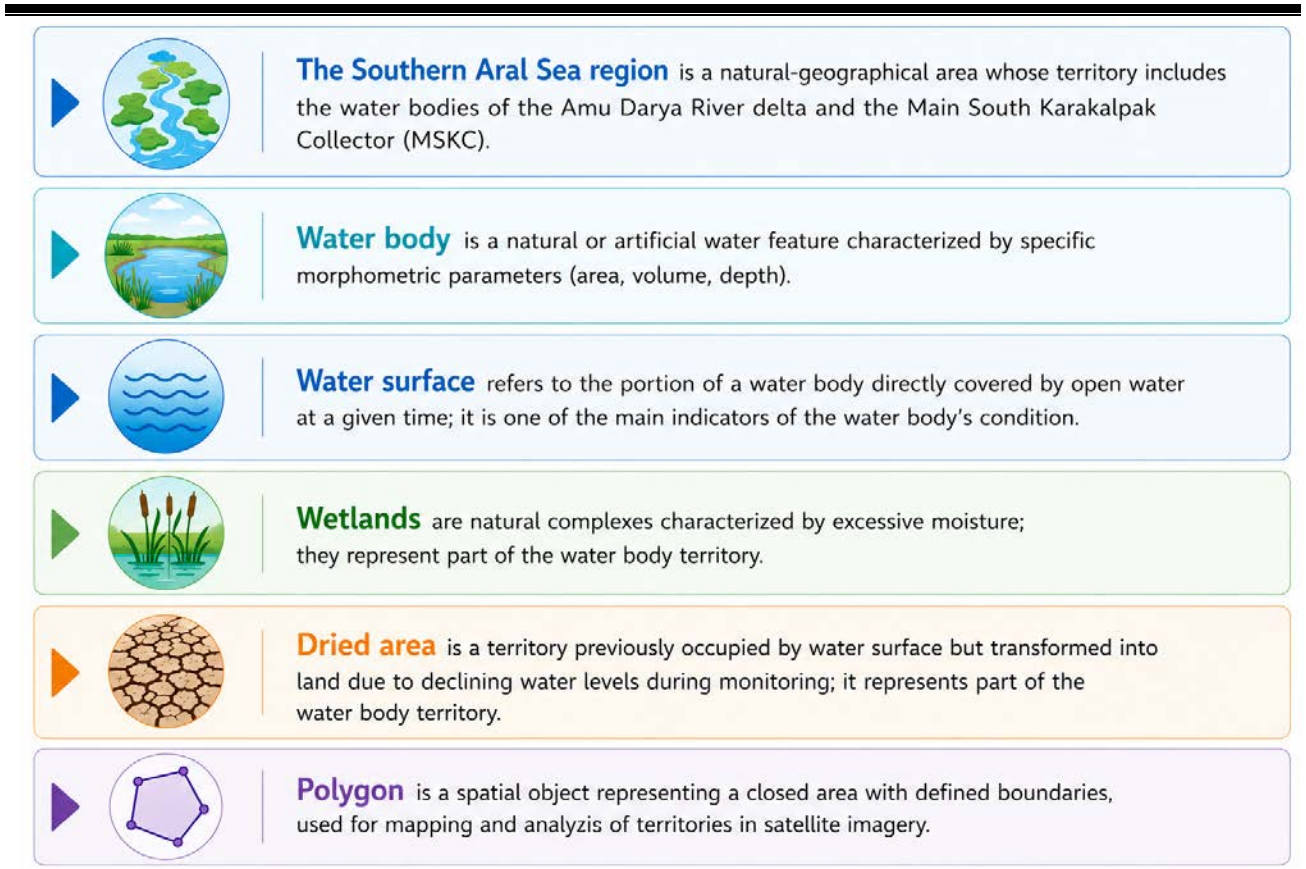
Monitoring results of changes in the water surface and wetland area of the Aral Sea and the Aral Region
30 August 2026

The SIC ICWC conducts continuous remote monitoring of the Western and Eastern parts of the Greater Aral Sea and the water surface of the Southern Aral Sea region using Landsat 8,9 satellite imagery. Based on the satellite images, the areas of open water surface, wetlands, and dried territories within the study polygon were determined. The monitoring results as of 30 August 2026 are presented in Figures 1–2 and Tables 1–6. Figure 3 presents the dynamics of the Amu Darya River discharge at the Samanbay gauging station.



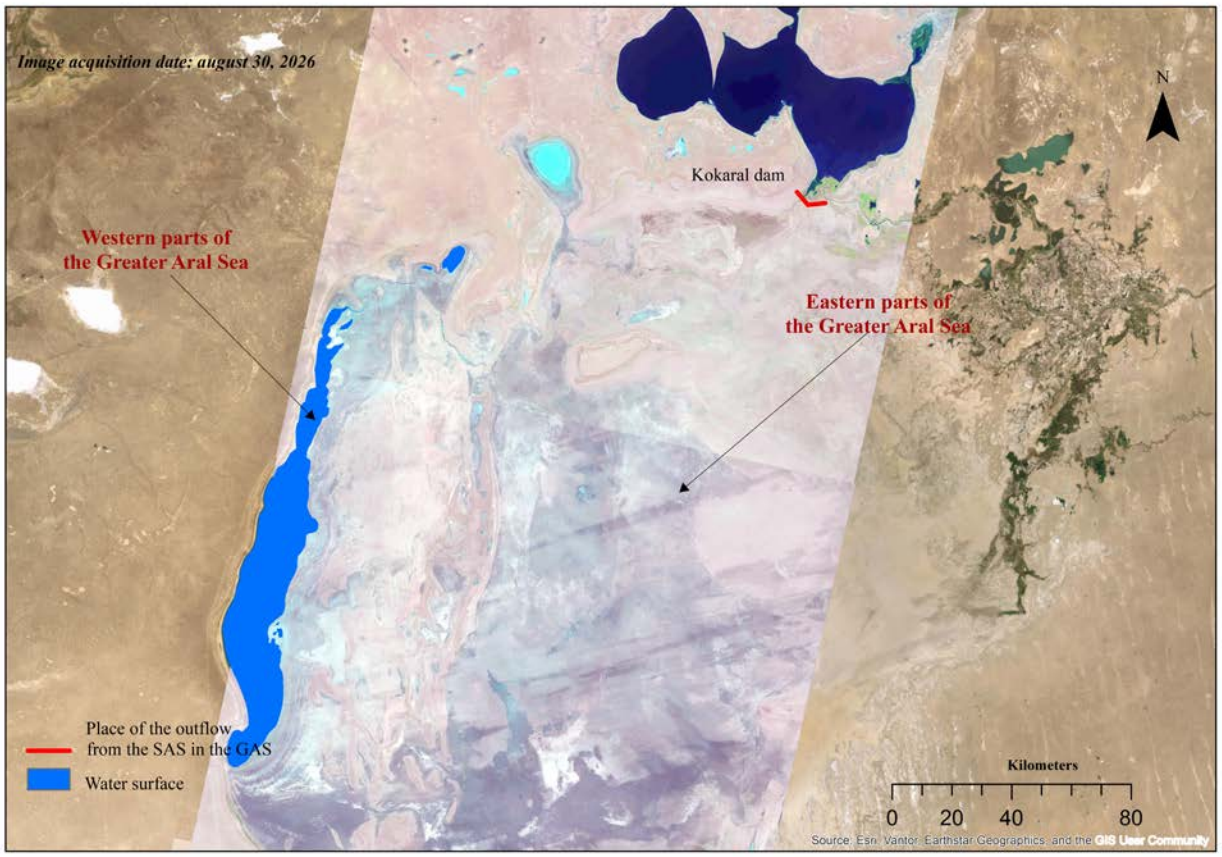


Figure 1. Western and Eastern parts of the Greater Aral Sea based on Landsat 8 imagery (August 30, 2026)

Table 1

The area of wetlands, open water surfaces and dried area in the Western and Eastern parts of the Greater Aral Sea

	23.11.2025	**15.03.2026**	**24.04.2026**	**02.05.2026**	**13.07.2026**	**30.08.2026**
	Western part of the Aral Sea, ha					
Wetland	352274	343185	342962	342883	340056	340274
Water surface	186661	185494	184932	184701	184649	184280
Dried area	22415	32671	33456	33766	36648	36796
	Eastern part of the Aral Sea, ha					
Wetland	1483877	1452192	Cloudy	1471028	Cloudy	1461073
Water surface	37	571		420		80
Dried area	12910	44061		33766		35671

Following the regression of the Aral Sea, zones with shallow groundwater tables (0.5–3 m) formed on the desiccated seabed, facilitating capillary moisture rise and the maintenance of moist

soils. These hydrogeological conditions provide the basis for the persistence of wetlands and the development of hydrophilic vegetation even in the absence of open surface water[1].

[1] Sektimenko V. The change in soil cover on the exposed bed of the Aral Sea. Journal of Marine Systems, 47(1–4), 121–125. DOI: 10.1016/j.jmarsys.2003.12.014

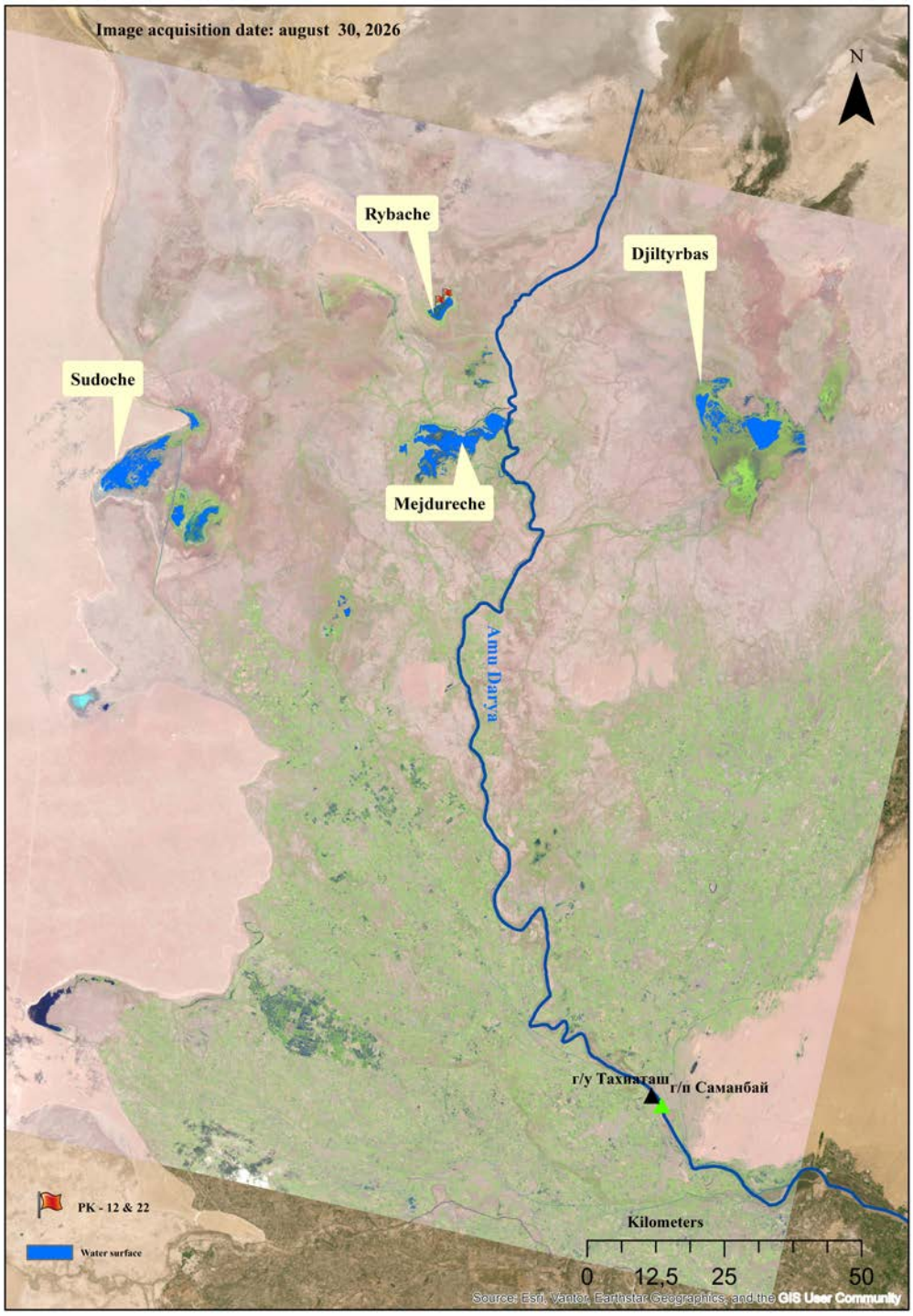


Figure 2. Southern Aral Sea region based on Landsat 9 imagery (August 30, 2026)

Table 2

Wetland areas of the Southern Aral Sea region, ha

Water body	**15.03.2026**	**02.05.2026**	**27.06.2026**	**13.07.2026**	**30.08.2026**
Sudoche	23170	8223	5280	7973	7404
Mejdureche	4301	715	634	805	965
Rybache	1668	123	113	147	112
Muynak	3863	537	129	56	48
Djiltyrbas dam-terminated	17251	13167	1745	713	598
Djiltyrbas (together with former right and left streams)	35929	6058	407	377	888
Dumalak	1731	21	4	4	1
Makpalkul	993	535	23	63	40
Mashan Karadjar	2826	602	206	118	75
Water surface southward of Muynak	3554	21	0	0	0
Water surface southward of Kazakhdarya	1453	10	0	0	0
Zakirkol	70	39	19	15	25
Total:	**96809**	**30051**	**8560**	**10271**	**10156**

Table 3

The area of open water surface in the Southern Aral Sea region, ha

Water body	**15.03.2026**	**02.05.2026**	**27.06.2026**	**13.07.2026**	**30.08.2026**
Sudoche	8198	12227	6228	5785	3245
Mejdureche	11718	9952	4182	5762	2441
Rybache	1543	1035	233	374	123
Muynak	1454	320	43	15	9
Djiltyrbas dam-terminated	12787	10654	5007	4741	4051
Djiltyrbas (together with former right and left streams)	1324	2606	69	18	28
Dumalak	2	0	0	0	0
Makpalkul	1817	817	56	128	72
Mashan Karadjar	1083	1026	284	198	48
Water surface southward of Muynak	158	0	0	0	0
Water surface southward of Kazakhdarya	0	0	0	0	0
Zakirkol	449	476	148	147	116
Total:	**40533**	**39113**	**16250**	**17168**	**10133**

Table 4

Dried area in the Southern Aral Sea region, ha

Water body	**15.03.2026**	**02.05.2026**	**27.06.2026**	**13.07.2026**	**30.08.2026**
Sudoche	41329	52247	61189	58939	62048
Mejdureche	21765	27117	32968	31217	34378
Rybache	8282	10335	11147	10972	11258
Muynak	10847	15307	15992	16093	16107
Djiltyrbas dam-terminated	17434	23651.39	40720	42018	42823
Djiltyrbas (together with former right and left streams)	61698	90287	98475	98556	98035
Dumalak	14317	16029	16046	16046	16049
Makpalkul	5874	7332	8605	8493	8572
Mashan Karadjar	23292	25573	26711	26885	27078
Water surface southward of Muynak	5893	9584	9605	9605	9605
Water surface southward of Kazakhdarya	3298.5	4741.5	4751.5	4751.5	4751.5
Zakirkol	2272.3	2276.3	2624.3	2629.3	2650.3
Total:	**216302**	**284480**	**328834**	**326205**	**333355**

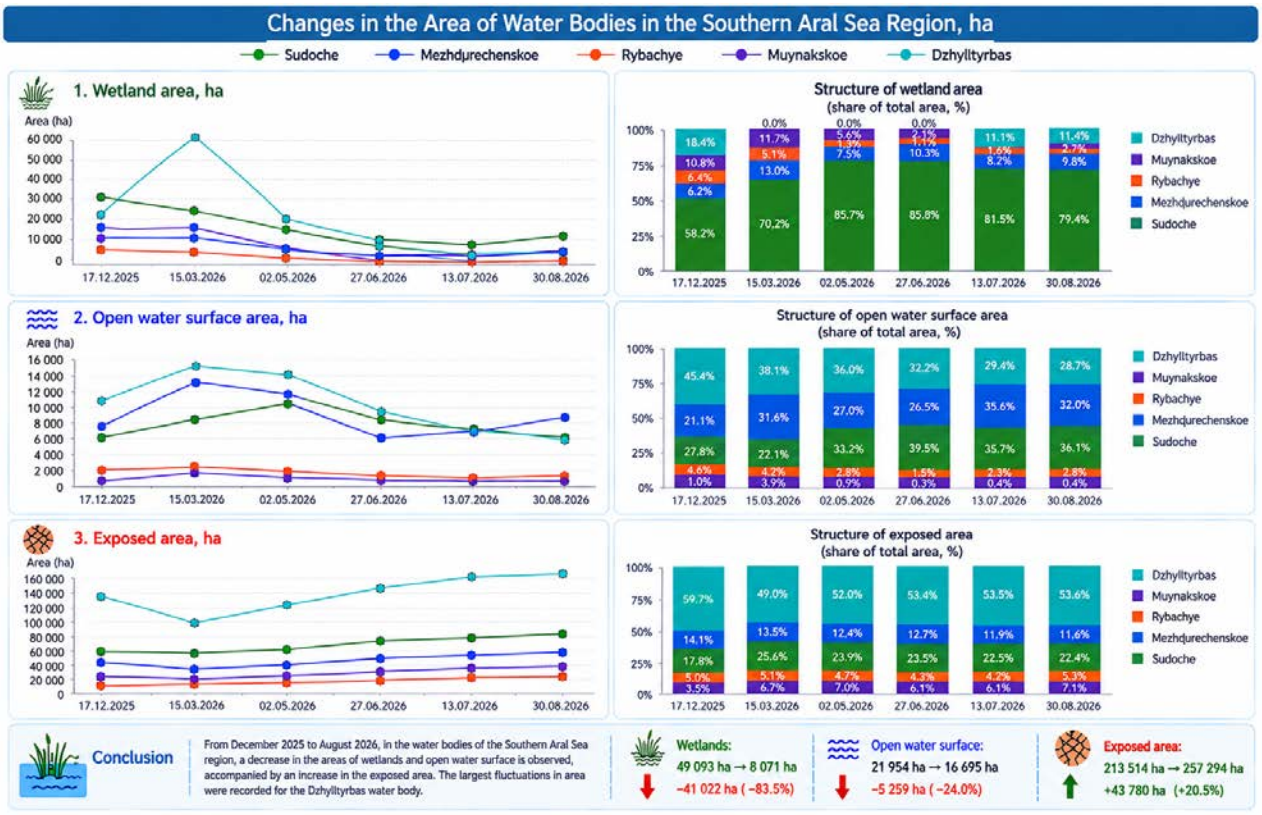


Figure 3. Dynamics of the Amu Darya River runoff at the Samanbay gauging station

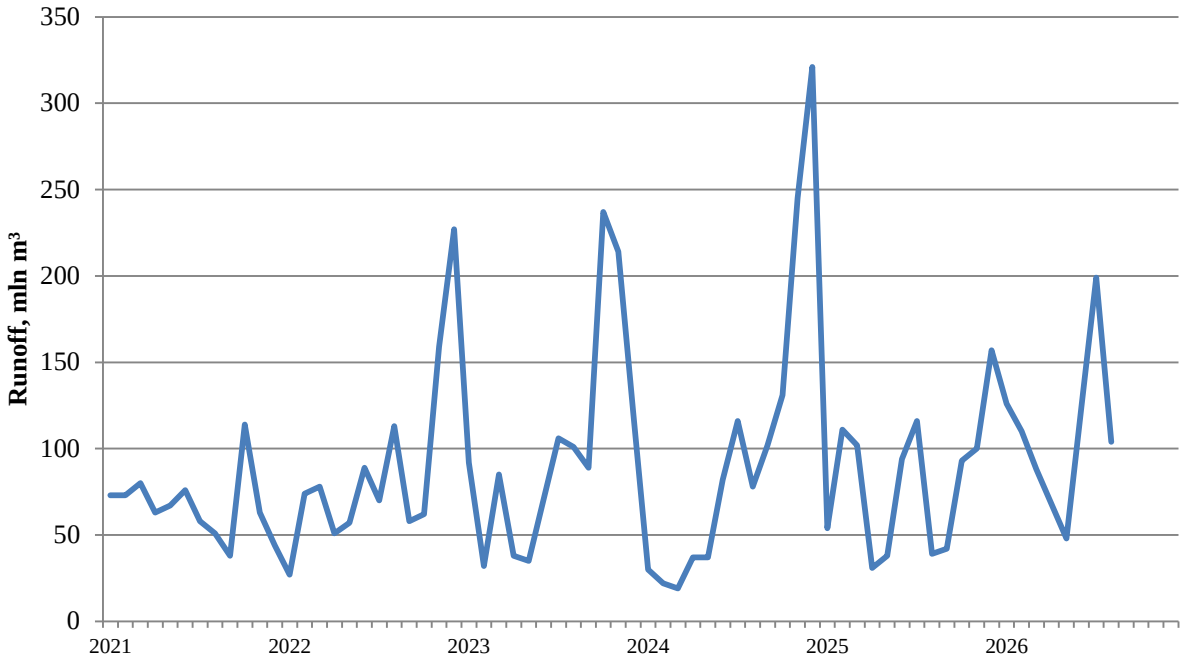


Table 5

Inflow to the Southern Aral Sea region, mln m3

Month	Delta			MSKC***	Total
	From Amu Darya River*	From canal systems**	Collector-drainage runoff**		
January	126	46	41	17	**230**
February	110	38	33	21	**202**
March	88	0	75	36	**199**
April	68	0	107	52.6	**227.6**
May	48	0	67	174.7	**289.7**
June	123	0	54	211.3	**388.3**
July	199	0	60	59.13	**318.13**
August	104	0	100	45.44	**249.44**

*Source: Uzhydrometeoservice (Samanbay) (fig. 2)
** Source: Ministry of Water Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Suenli, Bozatau, and Kyzketken canals), (collectors KS-1, KS-3, KS-4, and KKS)
***Source: BWO “Amu Darya”

Table 6

Outflow to the Greater Aral Sea, mln m^3

Month	From Amu Darya River*	MSKC**	Outflow from SAS***	Total
January	0	17	0	**17**
February	0	21	0	**21**
March	0	36	0	**36**
April	0	52.6	0	**52.6**
May	0	174.7	0	**174.7**
June	0	211.3	0	**211.3**
July	0	59.13	0	**59.13**
August	0	45.44	0	**45.44**

* Aral Sea Delta Management Authority, Rybachye Dam, PK 12 and PK 22 (fig. 2)
**Source: BWO “Amu Darya”
*** The National Hydrometeorological Service of Kazakhstan (fig. 1)

The monitoring results are as follows:

1. **Western part of the Aral Sea.** As of 30 August 2026, compared with July 2026, the water surface area decreased by 369 ha, while the wetland and exposed areas increased by 221 ha and 148 ha, respectively.
2. **Eastern part of the Aral Sea.** As of 30 August 2026, compared with May 2026, the water surface area decreased by 340 ha, the wetland area decreased by 9,955 ha, while the exposed area increased by 10,295 ha.
3. **Water bodies of the Southern Aral Sea region.** As of 30 August 2026, compared with July 2026, the total wetland area decreased from 10.2 thousand ha to 10.1 thousand ha. The open water surface area decreased from 17.1 thousand ha to 10.1 thousand ha, while the exposed area increased from 326.2 thousand ha to 333.3 thousand ha.
4. **Inflow to the Southern Aral Sea region.** In August 2026, the inflow volume amounted to 249.44 million m³. The main contribution was provided by the flow of the Amu Darya River, with additional water supply from canals and the collector-drainage system.

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