

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 April 24, 2026 (fig. 1). The figure 2 shows the dynamics of the Syr Darya River runoff based on inflow to the Aral Sea.

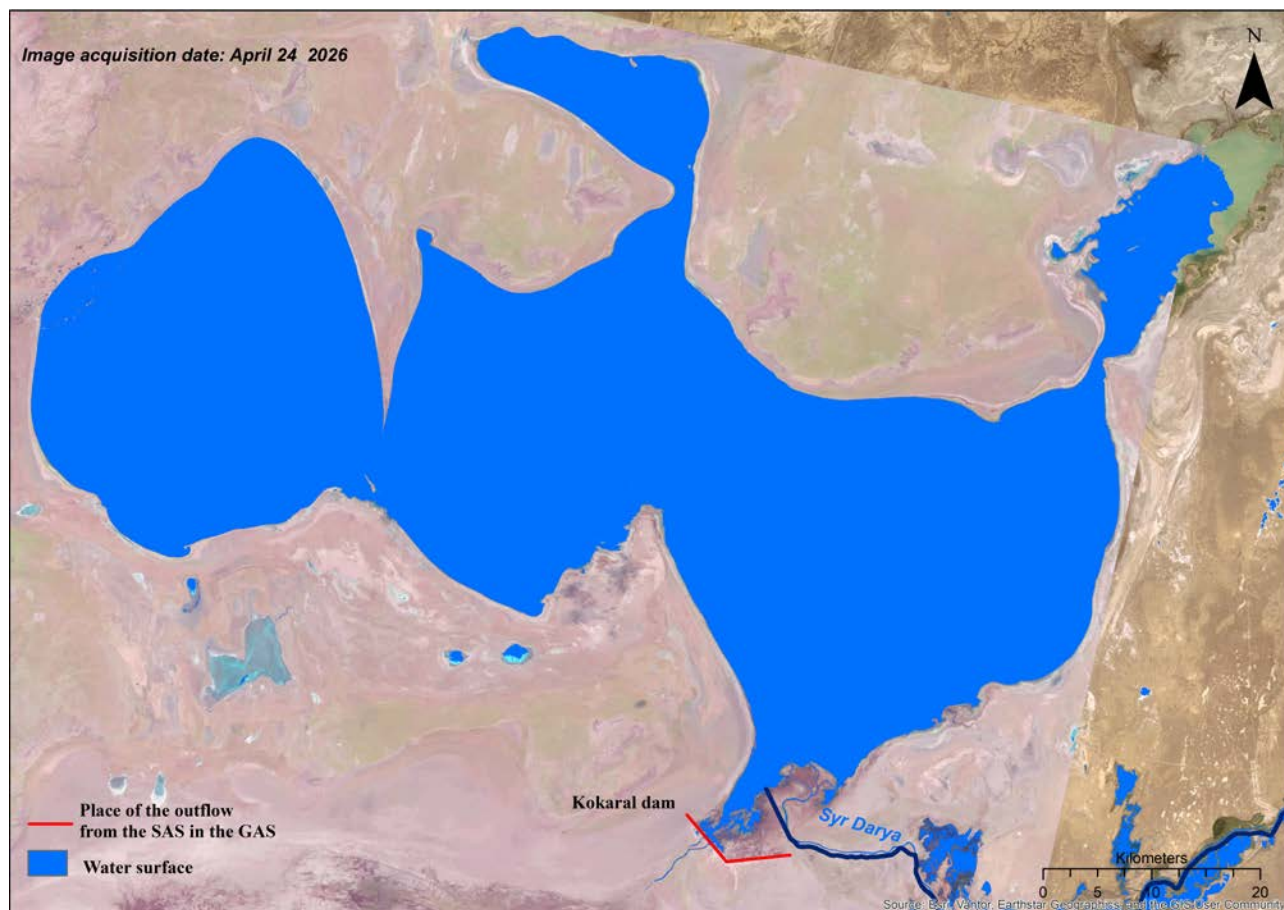


Figure 1. Small Aral Sea, Landsat 8 (April 24, 2026)

Table

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

	05.10.2025	23.11.2025	16.03.2026	24.04.2026
Wetland	39698	52413	54703	55103
Water surface	298312	299410	309367	309986
Dry land	203437	189624	177377	176358
Inflow from Syrdarya River*	September	October	February	March
(mln m ³)	37	35	149	200

* Kazhydromet data

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



The water surface area of the Small Aral Sea increased from 298.3 to 309.4 thousand hectares during the period from October 2025 to March 2026, indicating a positive trend and improved water availability in the water body. The total increase in the water surface area amounted to about 11.6 thousand hectares.

A particularly noticeable increase occurred during at the beginning of spring, which is associated with higher inflow from the Syr Darya River. While inflow in September and October 2025 amounted to 37 and 35 million m³, respectively, it increased to 200 million m³ in March 2026, significantly affected the hydrological regime of the water body.

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