

The Aral Sea

Disappearing since the 1960s...

Overview

“The **Aral Sea** is a lake on the boundary between the former Soviet Republics Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Once the world's fourth-largest inland sea with an area of 26,255 sq. miles, **the Aral Sea has been steadily shrinking since the 1960s**. By 2004, the sea had shrunk to 25% of its original surface area, and a nearly fivefold increase in salinity had killed most of its natural flora and fauna. **By 2007 it had declined to 10% of its original size**, splitting into three separate lakes, two of which are too salty to support fish. **The once prosperous fishing industry has been virtually destroyed, and former fishing towns along the original shores have become ship graveyards**. With this collapse has come unemployment and economic hardship. The Aral Sea is also heavily polluted. Wind-blown salt from the dried seabed damages crops, and **polluted drinking water** and salt- and dust-laden air cause serious public health problems. The retreat of the sea has reportedly also caused local **climate change**, with summers becoming hotter and drier, and winters colder and longer.”

1989



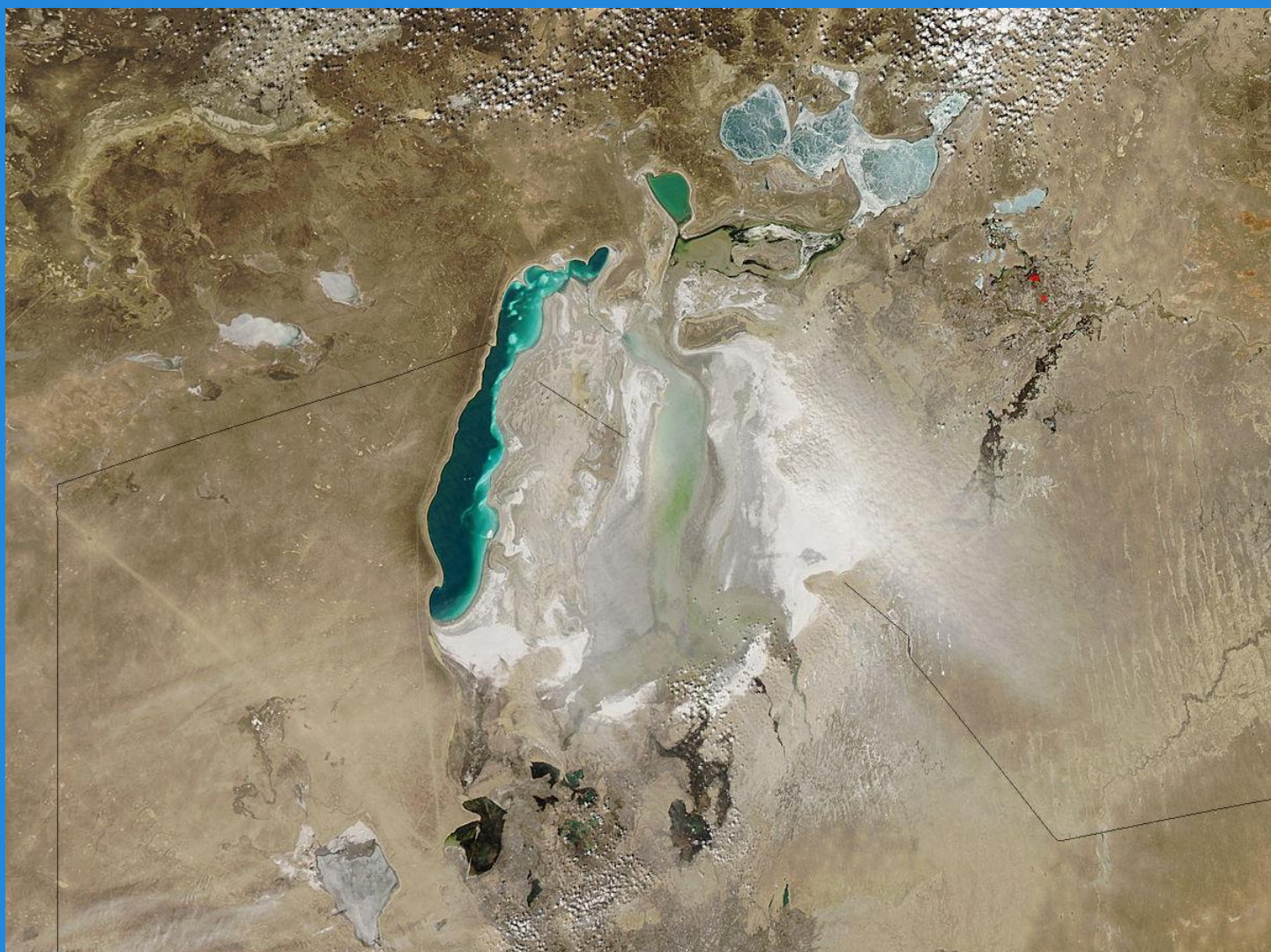
July - September, 1989

2003



August 12, 2003

2010



So...

Why does this matter?

Why might this be a problem?

1) The Shrinking Aral Sea – Uzbekistan, (2001):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOfEqXI4G30&feature=related>

2) Aral Sea – Kazakhstan, (2007):

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAUyddi_5j8&feature=related

3) Aral Sea Fished Again, (2008):

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7479760.stm>

Video Time: Pay attention, see if your question gets answered.

Aral Sea Crisis: Activity

Working alone, or in small groups, please answer the 'Aral Sea Crisis' questions.

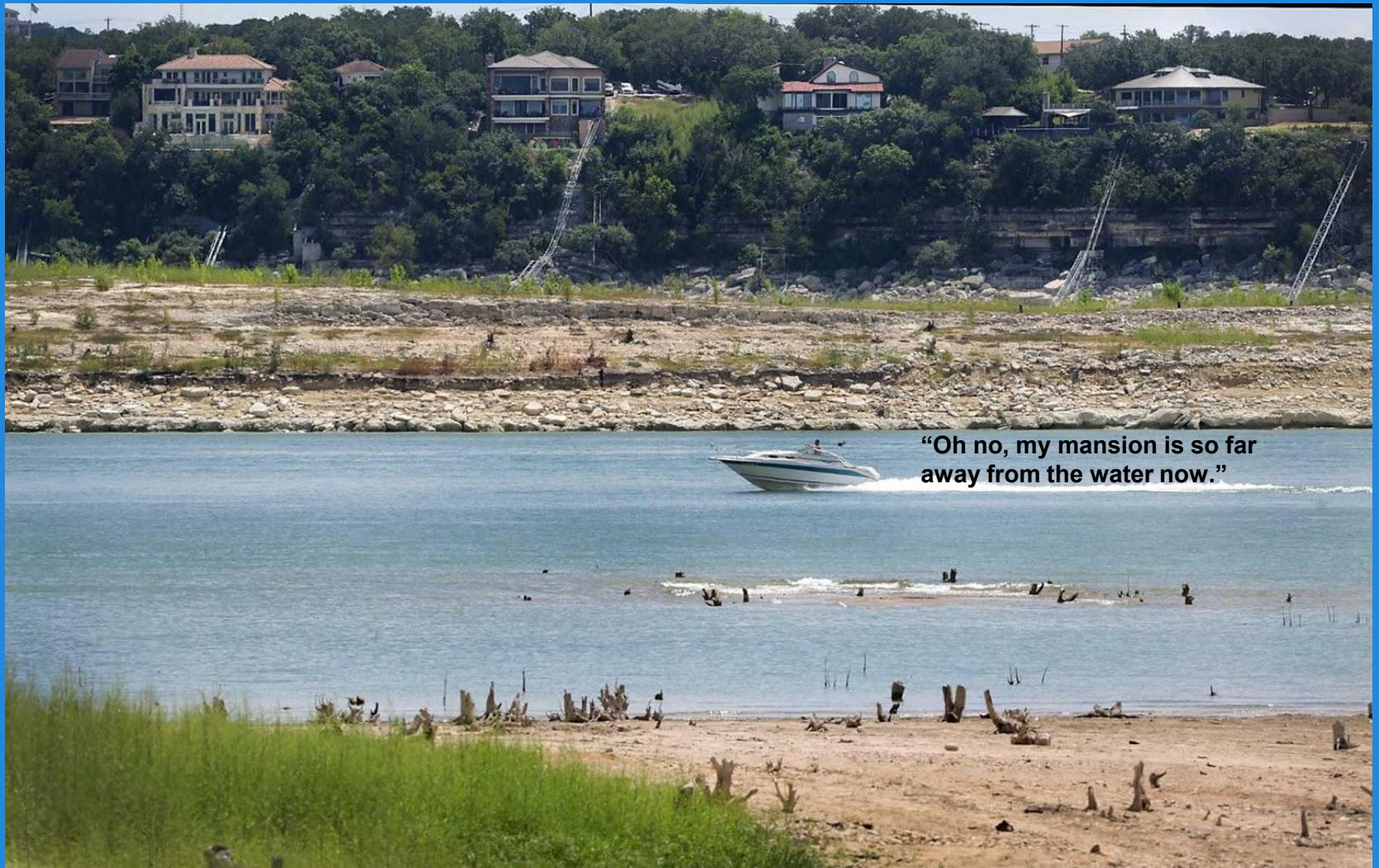
Use your knowledge from the **videos** as well as the reading from the **chapter**. Try to synthesize (combine) this information.

You must write in complete sentences.

Lake Travis







“Oh no, my mansion is so far away from the water now.”

Questions for Lake Travis

What local industries could be suffering if Lake Travis continues to dry up?

What might be the environmental impact of losing water in Lake Travis?

What long-term costs could affect the people of Austin?

HYPOTHETICAL question: What happens to Texas if the lake levels continue to drop? What happens if all of the fresh-water resources are gone?