

Session V – Large Lakes, Deltas, and Transboundary Partnerships: Fostering Science, Cooperation, and Sound Management
1:50 PM

Two Great Lakes of North Asia: Lake Baikal and Lake Taymyr

Dmitry F. Pavlov¹, Richard Robarts², and Alexander V. Zhulidov³

¹Institute for Biology of Inland Waters, Russian Academy of Sciences, Borok, Yaroslavl, Russia, Email: pavlov@ibiw.yaroslavl.ru

²UNEP GEMS/Water, Burlington, Ontario, Canada

³CPPI-S, Ltd., Rostov-on-Don, Russia

Abstract

Lake Baikal, the world's largest lake, contains about 20% of the world's freshwater reserves. The lake is inhabited by a unique faunistic complex: 75% of the whole species diversity is represented by endemic species. Preservation of this world treasure, the Sacred Lake for Russians, Buryats, Yakuts, is an extremely important task. Moreover, the lake itself and its catchment area are important for the local economy. Many industrial enterprises are situated in the region. During the last decade, tourism, fishing, and hunting have developed intensively and often in an uncontrolled manner, placing increased anthropogenic pressures upon the ecosystem. These activities are the main source of income for several thousands of residents in towns and settlements situated along the shores of the lake. However, the negative consequences of human activities and industry in its modern state may be dangerous for Baikal. The implementation of new technologies in industry and land use practices, development of efficient systems of environmental monitoring and control, and development of intensive environmental educational campaigns are urgently needed to preserve the lake. Lake Baikal is famous, but there are other outstanding lakes in Northern Asia. One of them, much less known than Baikal yet interesting, is Lake Taymyr. Our studies revealed that this lake is one of the world's cleanest and least affected by human activity. In our opinion the lake region has a great potential for environmental researchers and for development of ecotourism, game fishing, and hunting.