



U216 Environment - Lake Baikal

Pearl of Siberia

V/O

In 1996, Lake Baikal was made a World Heritage site, an area of "outstanding universal value", and one which is unlike anywhere else in the world..

Jenny

What needs to be appreciated is that we're talking about a lake that is in the region of 25 million years old, and an ecosystem that has been developing over this period of time. An enormous period of time, completely isolated, practically completely isolated from the outside world.

V/O

But in recent decades, Lake Baikal has begun to lose its isolation.

The region's natural resources have been increasingly exploited to support economic development, first of the Soviet Union and now of Russia.

The lake has become an environment at risk in a country experiencing the uncertainties associated with the shift from a centrally planned to a market economy.