

Oil Spill Threatens Siberian River

By [The Moscow Times](#)

June 28, 2012



A section of the Angara River near the town of Listvyanka, about 70 kilometers south of Irkutsk.

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Authorities in the Irkutsk region are scrambling to deal with an oil spill on the Angara River, the second to strike the Siberian waterway in as many months.

A 4-kilometer oil slick was discovered near the right bank of the Siberian waterway late Wednesday evening, local authorities said.

Emergency Situations Ministry officials said Thursday morning that the spill had been contained using booms, and presented no threat to the environment or the local population, Interfax reported.

Officials have not yet confirmed the cause of the spill, but it was earlier reported that the oil may have leaked from a barge that had been gathering gravel on the river.

It is the second oil spill this year to strike the Angara, which is the only river to flow out

of Lake Baikal and is the headwater tributary of the Yenesei River.

At the end of April over 70,000 local residents were left without access to clean water for a week after 300 tons of oil leaked into the river from a pipeline that had been illegally tapped.

One environmentalist warned that the spill is symptomatic of long-term damage to the river's eco-system from industry.

"Intensive industrial activity on the Angara has already led to sediments becoming so polluted that dredging cannot be carried out because of the risk of releasing pollutants from the riverbed," Alexei Knizhnikov of WWF Russia told RIA-Novosti.

Original url: <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2012/06/28/oil-spill-threatens-siberian-river-a15836>