

St. Petersburg Ballerina Dances on Ice to Save Local Beach

February 23, 2021



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A ballerina from St. Petersburg’s renowned Mariinsky Theatre has filmed herself dancing on the ice of the Gulf of Finland in a move to save a local beach from development.

Ilmira Bagautdinova is one of thousands speaking out against plans to construct a port terminal for grain shipments on Batareinaya Bay, a beach roughly 100 kilometers west of Russia’s second-largest city. In a video on Facebook, the ballerina performs a dance from Tchaikovsky’s “Swan Lake” in a nod to the swans that inhabit the area.

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“A unique natural and historical place where swans nest in spring, families with children rest in summer and hundreds of fishermen go out on the ice in winter ... Nature in harmony with people. All of this is under threat of destruction,” Bagautdinova wrote, urging people to sign a

[petition](#) calling on President Vladimir Putin to halt the beach's development.

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In May 2020, the Russian government [leased](#) Batareinaya Bay to the Baltic Grain Terminal for 10 years, allowing the company to build a 35 billion ruble (\$470 million) production and logistics complex and grain terminal there by 2024.

Activists say that in addition to being a popular recreation spot, the bay is part of a former protected wildlife zone and is a key habitat for rare plant species; animals such as the gray seal and ringed seal; and waterfowl and migratory birds, some of whom appear in the Red Book of endangered species.

In January 2021, Leningrad region governor Alexander Drozdenko [said](#) there was “no need” to build a separate port for grain shipments on Batareinaya Bay.

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