

COORDINATION COMMITTEE ON HYDROMETEOROLOGY OF THE CASPIAN SEA (CASPCOM)

Information bulletin on the state of the Caspian Sea level

No. 31
7 May 2026

The Bulletin on the state of the Caspian Sea level is issued twice a year in accordance with the recommendations of CASPCOM and is a joint product of the national meteorological and hydrological services (NMHSs) of the five Caspian littoral states.

According to the data received from the NMHSs of the Caspian littoral states, the mean level of the Caspian Sea decreased by 11–26 cm in 2025 compared with 2024. It reached the following marks¹: at Makhachkala -29.12 m abs. (26 cm lower), at Naft Dashlari -28.99 m abs. (14 cm lower), at Fort Shevchenko -29.53 m (15 cm lower), at Turkmenbashi -29.30 m (11 cm lower), Guvlymayak -29.50 m (13 cm lower), Duzlybogaz (Kara-Bogaz-Gol) -29.60 m abs. (15 cm lower) (Fig. 1).

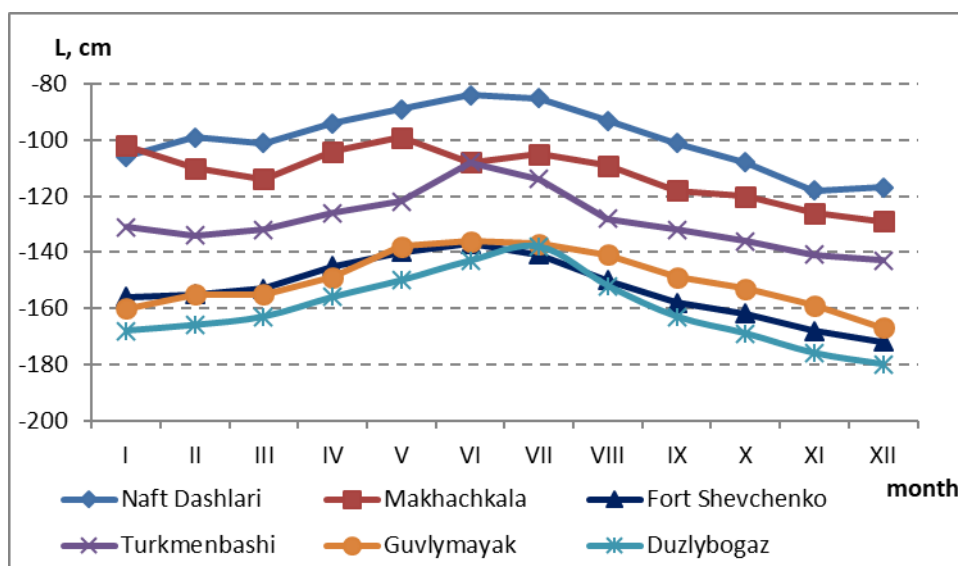


Fig. 1 Seasonal run of the Caspian Sea level in 2025

One of the main reasons for this sea level drop was the reduced flow of the Volga River in 2025 (204 cubic km at the delta top, Verkhnelebyazhye gauge station), which was significantly below the long-term average (238 cubic km) and approximately at the level of the flow in 2023 (207.5 cubic km). Low water flow was observed for the fifth consecutive year, and the low-water period was exacerbated by hot and dry weather in the second half of 2025.

¹ The mean sea level was not calculated because the data at Baku station were not available for technical reasons

In January 2026, the sea level at Makhachkala station was about 28 cm lower than in January 2025, however it showed a little growth to April similar to the previous year (Fig. 2).

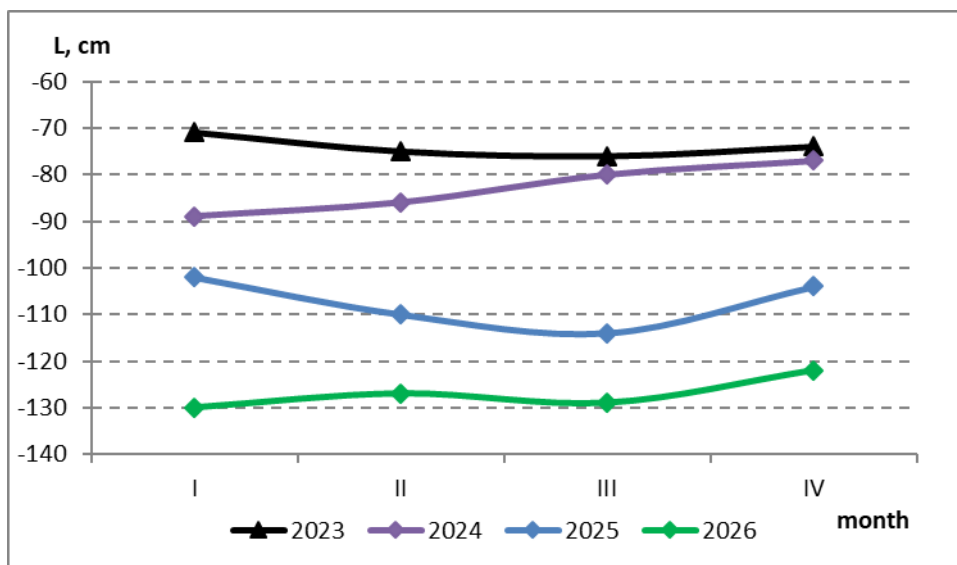


Fig. 2 Seasonal run of the Caspian Sea level (Makhachkala station) in early 2026 compared to early 2025, 2024 and 2023

During the first four months of 2026, the Volga flow was approximately 3–4 cubic km greater than its water flow for the same months of the low-water years 2023 and 2024 (Fig. 3). The spring flood in the current year began in the second half of April, as in those years, but it is going somewhat differently. Unlike the five last years, water inflow in the second quarter of 2026 is expected to be at the level of 120 cubic km, whereas it barely reached 73 cubic km last year. The peak of this year's flood is occurring in the first ten days of May, and discharge rates recorded at 24,000 cubic m/sec and higher since April 20. It is possible that the Volga flow in 2026 will be close to its long-term average.

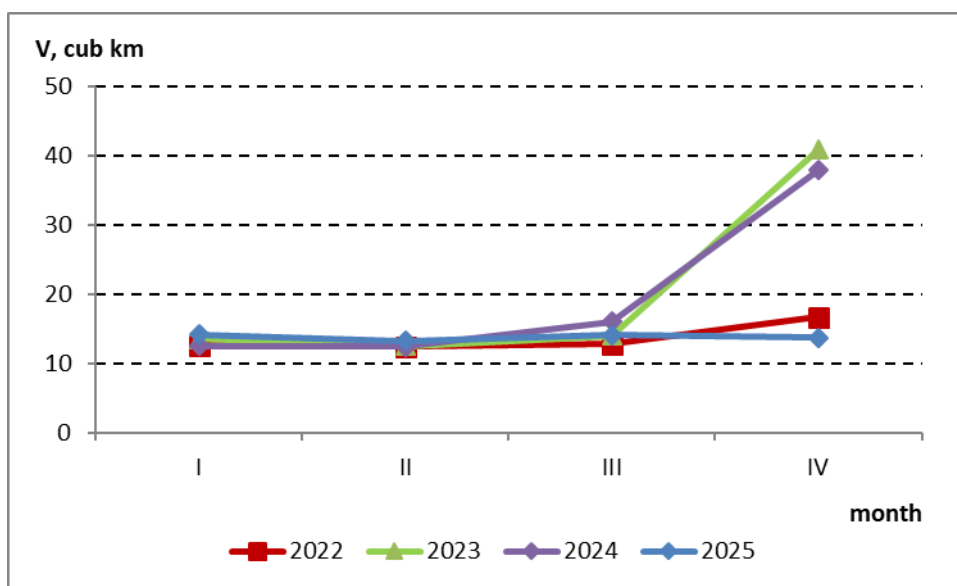


Fig. 3 Monthly discharge of the Volga River in early 2026 compared to early 2025, 2024 and 2023

In this connection, although a further decrease in the Caspian Sea level is expected in 2026, a significant reduction in its intensity is likely. According to the Caspian Sea level forecast published in the bulletin No. 36 (dated 27.04.2026) by the Hydrometeorological Center of Russia, the sea level at Makhachkala station² will decrease by 13 cm this year compared to the last year. Graphs of the annual run of the level in 2026 and early 2027 compared to 2025 are shown in Fig. 4.

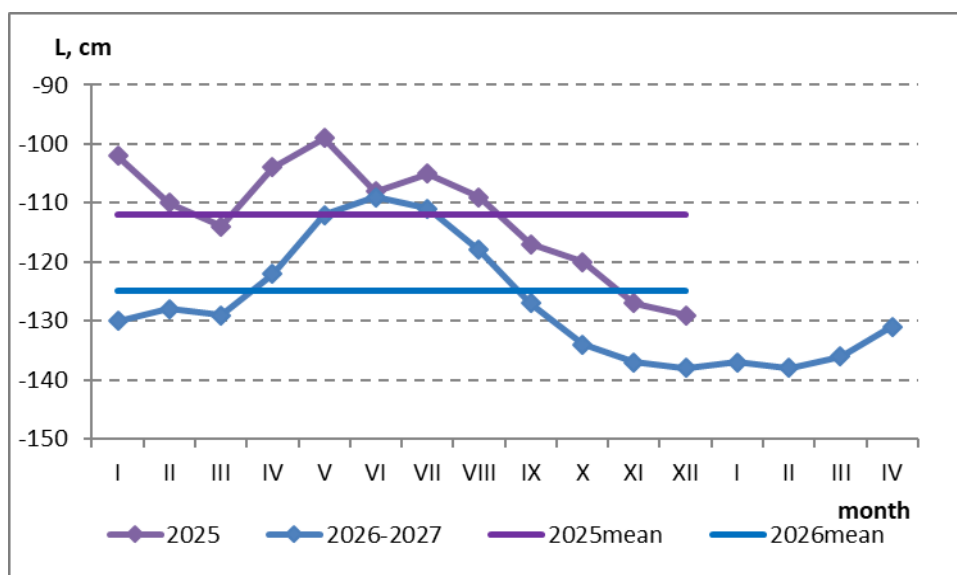


Fig.4 Monthly levels of the Caspian Sea (at Makhachkala station) in 2025 and projected sea levels in 2026 and the first quarter of 2027 (according to the Russian Hydrometeorological Center)

Graphs of the annual run of the level at the other 5 stations in 2026 are shown in Fig. 5.

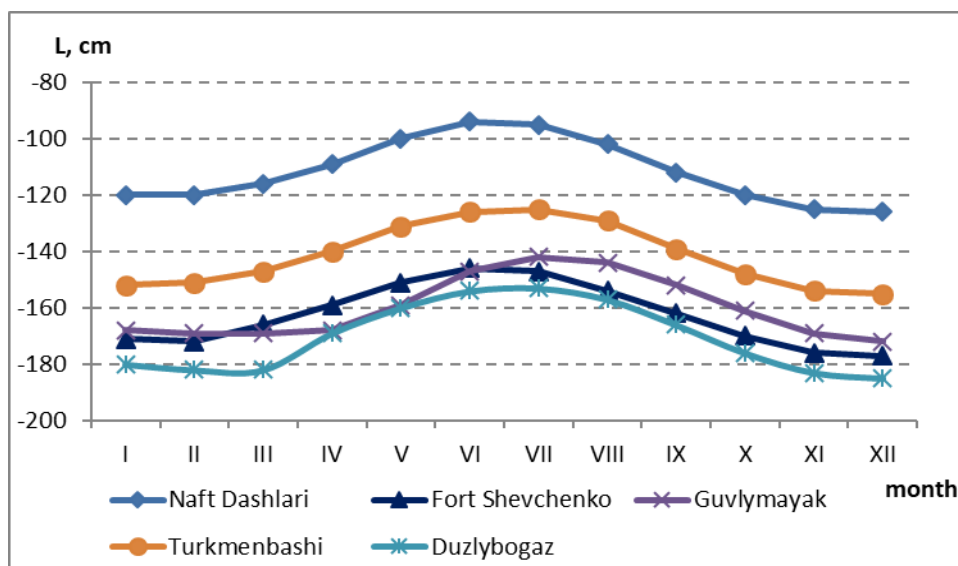


Fig.5 Monthly levels of the Caspian Sea in 2026 (according to the Russian Hydrometeorological Center)

² The Caspian Sea mean level has not been projected because of missing data

This bulletin is intended for the authorities, enterprises, organizations and coastal communities as well as for all whose activities are connected with the Caspian Sea. Its preparation became possible only due to the cooperation of hydrometeorological organizations of the Caspian littoral states. The data of the General Catalogue of the Caspian Sea level elaborated under CASPCOM umbrella were used to compile the bulletin