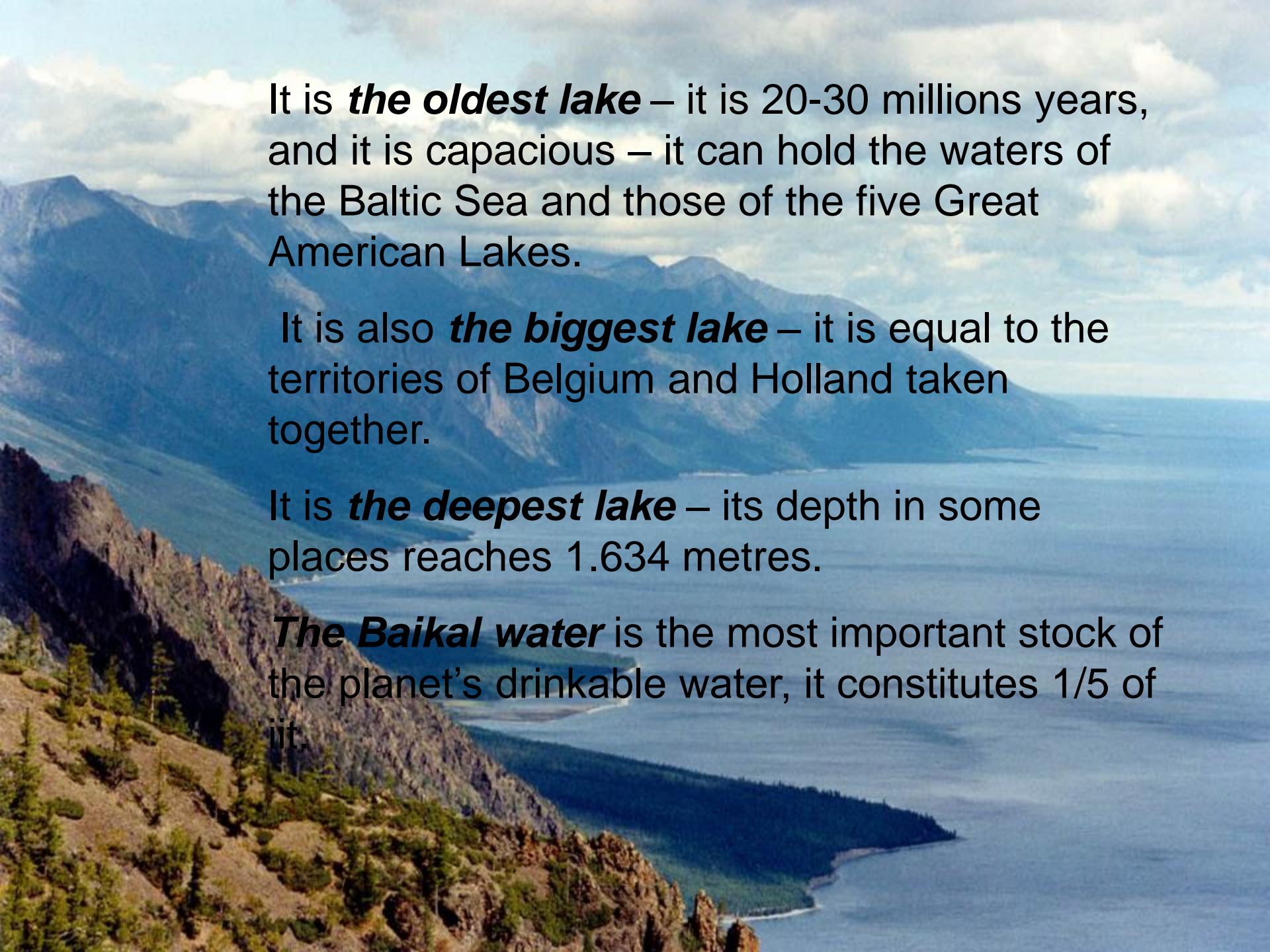


A scenic view of Lake Baikal, showing a large, forested mountain in the background and the calm, blue water of the lake in the foreground. The text "Lake Baikal" is overlaid in a large, yellow, stylized font with a black outline and a drop shadow.

Lake Baikal



Lake Baikal is an amazing feature of Nature. It is situated in the centre of the Asian continent. The lake is unique in all respects.



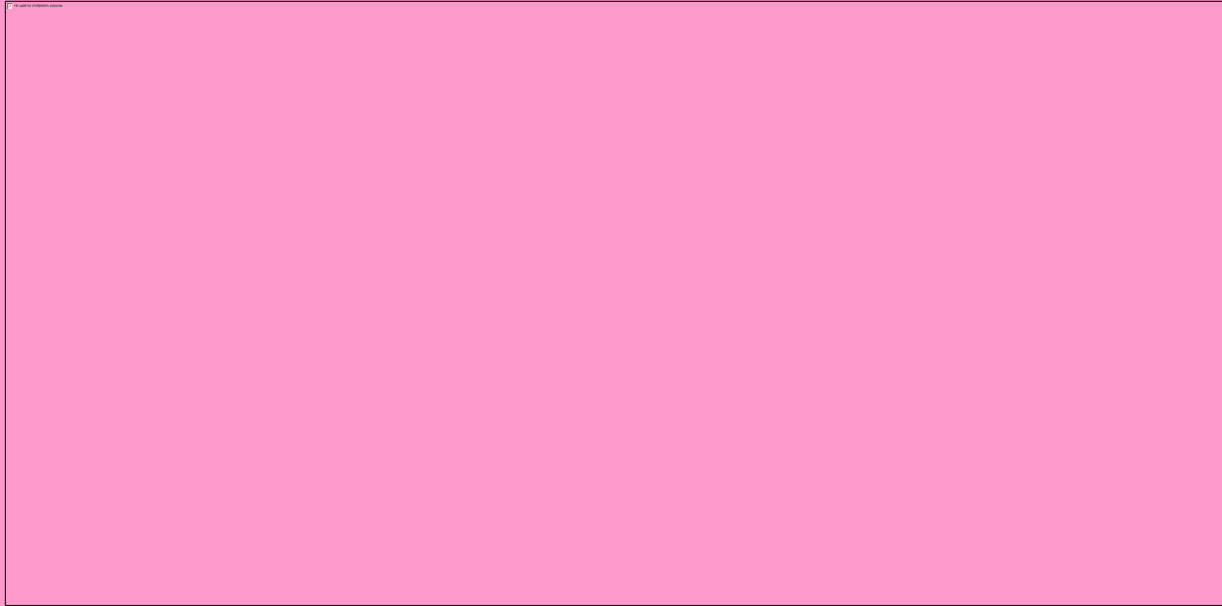
It is ***the oldest lake*** – it is 20-30 millions years, and it is capacious – it can hold the waters of the Baltic Sea and those of the five Great American Lakes.

It is also ***the biggest lake*** – it is equal to the territories of Belgium and Holland taken together.

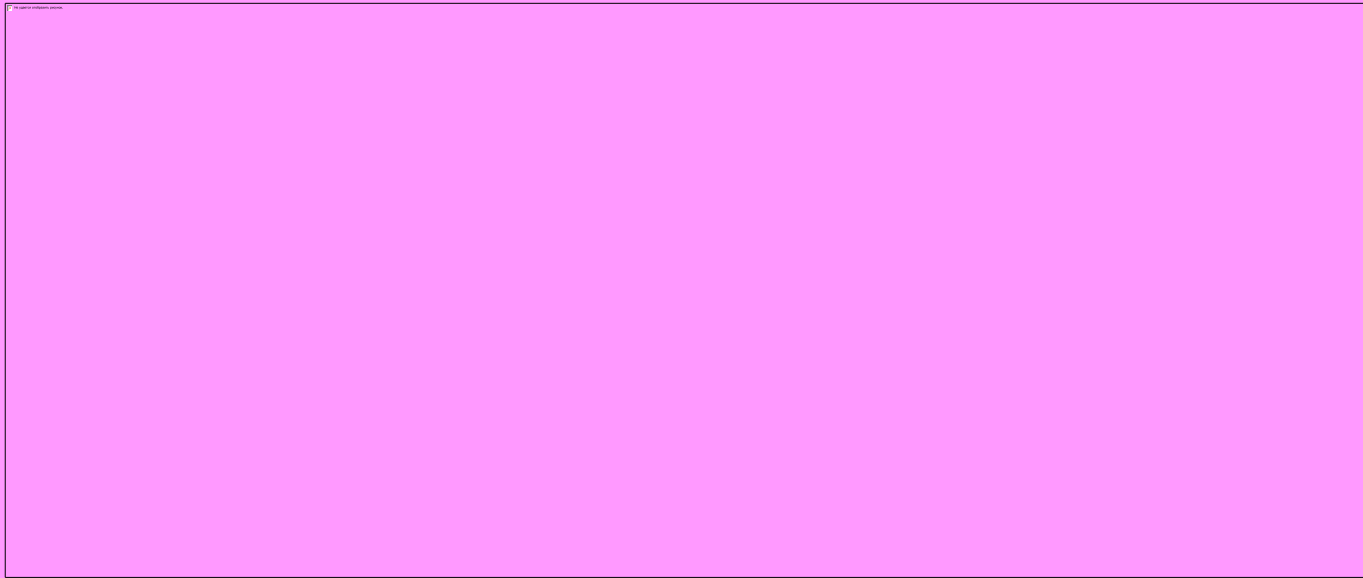
It is ***the deepest lake*** – its depth in some places reaches 1.634 metres.

The Baikal water is the most important stock of the planet's drinkable water, it constitutes 1/5 of it.

There are 852 species, 233 kinds of seaweeds, more than 1550 kinds of animals, 50 species of fish, nearly 600 species of plants, and 300 species of birds.

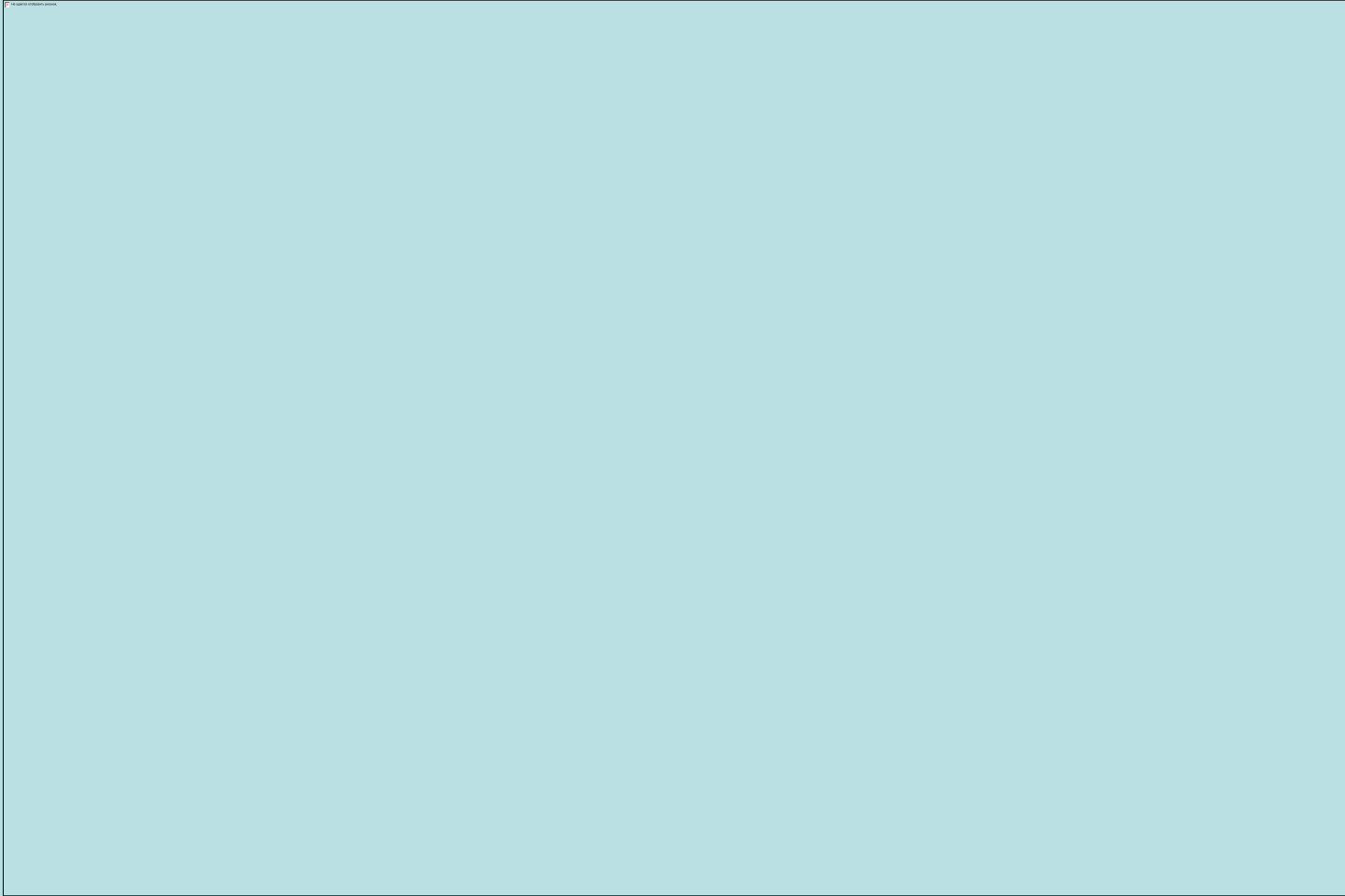


Do you know about the famous Baikal fish? Certainly it's omul. But omul came from the ocean. How could omul reach the lake? The Baikal omul lives 5-14 years. For its reproduction the omul swims up the tributaries of Baikal: the upper Angara, the Kichera, the Selenga and other small rivers.



There is a mysterious self-bearing fish – golomyanka. It throws 2-3 thousands of larvae into the water and perishes. Its body is without scales. Its body is transparent and in light you can see its skeleton. The golomyanka's body consists of 3% of fat. And it is used in the Tibetan medicine.

The taiga expanses surrounding Lake Baikal are famous for fur-bearing animals, such as squirrels, sables, stoats, minks, foxes, hares and others. In the taiga in the vicinity of Baikal you can meet bears, the lynx and the Siberian reindeer.



Barguzin sables have always been considered the greatest wealth of the lake Baikal area. They are beautiful and strong, especially near the lake and in places where it is colder. Their shimmering dark fur stands out for its silkiness.

Baikal's flora

Lake Baikal and its shores have been declared a specially protected zone of our country. There is a hope that one of the most beautiful and deepest lakes in the world will never die.