**Baikal: ancient lake in a changing world**

Ancient, enormous and cold, Siberia’s Lake Baikal is a one of the world’s most unusual lakes and a UNESCO world heritage site. Lake Baikal is host to numerous endemic plant and animal species that come together to form a unique and fascinating ecosystem. Although geographically isolated, Lake Baikal has not escaped negative consequences of human-caused environmental change. Overexploitation of fisheries, inputs of toxic contaminants, climate change and, most recently, eutrophication are impacting the lake in severe and not completely understood ways. In this talk I will discuss the results of recent work on various components of the Baikal ecosystem in the context of ongoing environmental changes. I will highlight studies on the role of nutrient pollution in driving nuisance benthic algal blooms, the effect of climate change on cold-loving plankton and the history of heavy metal contamination in the lake’s freshwater seals.