This year, for the first time in its long history, Iraq’s Lake Sawa dried up.

今年，在其漫长的历史中，伊拉克的萨瓦湖第一次干涸。

“This lake was known as the pearl of the south,” said 35-year-old al-Aqouli, who lives in Samawa, near the lake.

35岁的阿尔·奥贝迪住在湖附近的萨马瓦。他说：“这片湖被称为南部珍珠。”

“Now it is our tragedy.”

“现在，它是我们的悲剧。”

A combination of bad ownership by local investors, government neglect and climate change has turned Lake Sawa into a salty, flat area.

当地投资者糟糕的所有权、政府的忽视以及气候变化的共同作用，使萨瓦湖变成了一个盐碱化、平坦的地区。

The loss of Lake Sawa is only the latest addition to Iraq’s water shortage.

萨瓦湖干涸只是伊拉克水资源短缺新增加的一处。

Experts say it is caused by climate change.

专家表示，这是由气候变化引起的。

Iraq has had drought and record low rainfall for years.

伊拉克多年来一直干旱，降雨量创历史新低。

The importance of water is driving up competition among businessmen and farmers.

水的重要性正在加剧商人和农民之间的竞争。

The poorest Iraqis are affected the most by the disaster.

最贫穷的伊拉克人受这场灾难的影响最大。

The narrow stretch of farmland along the Euphrates River is surrounded by desert.

幼发拉底河沿岸狭窄的农田被沙漠包围。

The area was ignored by the government starting in the 1980s.

从20世纪80年代开始，该地区就被政府忽略了。

Locals call the area surrounding Lake Sawa “atshan” — meaning “thirsty” in Arabic.

当地人称萨瓦湖周围的地区为“atshan”——在阿拉伯语中的意思是“口渴的”。

Formed over rock, the lake has no path for water to move in or out.

这片湖是在岩石上形成的，没有水流进和流出的通道。

For a long time, nobody knew where the Lake’s water came from.

在很长一段时间里，没有人知道这片湖的水是从哪里来的。

Locals tell stories about how the water came to be in the lake.

当地人传颂着湖水是如何流入湖中的故事。

It is now known that the water comes from underground through a system of holes and breaks in rock.

现在人们知道了，水是通过岩石上的洞和裂缝从地下流进湖里的。

Rain from nearby valleys also feeds into the lake.

附近山谷的雨水也汇入湖中。

Lots of rain can cause flooding.

大量降雨会导致洪水泛滥。

The lake sits five meters above sea level.

这个湖海拔五米。

It is about 1.8 kilometers long.

大约有1.8公里长。

Laith Ali al-Obeidi is an environmental activist in southern Iraq.

莱斯·阿里·奥贝迪是伊拉克南部的一名环保活动人士。

“The degradation of the water began over 10 years ago, but this summer was the first time we lost the entire wetland,” he said.

他说：“水的流失在10多年前就开始了，但今年夏天我们第一次失去了整片湿地”。

Experts said the lake has not dried up permanently.

专家表示，该湖泊尚未永久干涸。

They say its disappearance this year is because of thousands of illegal wells.

他们表示，今年该湖泊消失的原因来自数千口非法水井。

Businessmen in nearby factories dig the wells because they cannot get enough water.

附近工厂的商人之所以挖井，是因为他们得不到足够的水。

Some water began to come back into the lake by early June.

到6月初，一些水开始流回湖里。

That was when the harvest season ended, meaning farmers did not need as much water.

那是收获季结束的时候，这意味着农民不需要那么多的水。

Aoun Diab is an adviser to the Water Resources Ministry.

奥恩·迪亚布是水利部的顾问。

He said that closing illegal wells would have helped heal Lake Sawa.

他说，关闭非法水井有助于修复萨瓦湖。

These would directly affect the economic interests of local officials.

但这会直接影响到当地官员的经济利益。

The problem is not only affecting humans, but other animals as well.

这个问题不仅影响人类，也影响其他动物。

Lake Sawa is a complex ecosystem.

萨瓦湖是一个复杂的生态系统。

Sawa was filled with fish that were food for different kinds of birds.

湖里充满了鱼，它们是各种鸟类的食物。

When the lake dried up, the fish died.

湖水干涸时，鱼就死了。

Now the birds will have to find other food.

现在，这些鸟将不得不寻找其他食物。

Lake Sawa is “a case study for climate change in Iraq,” al-Obeidi said.

阿尔·奥贝迪说，萨瓦湖是“伊拉克气候变化的一个个案研究”。

“This is the future.”

“这就是未来。”

I’m Caty Weaver.

凯蒂·韦弗报道。