



KRONOTSKY
State Nature Biosphere Reserve

**MINISTRY
OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT OF THE RUSSIAN
FEDERATION**
(Russian Ministry of Natural Resources)
**FEDERAL STATE INSTITUTION
KRONOTSKY FEDERAL NATURE BIOSPHERE RESERVE
(FSI "Kronotsky Reserve")**

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Calls for collaboration and volunteering

Socio-Ecosystem of South Kamchatka – Sustainable Development for People and Nature



Overview

South Kamchatka (Far East of Russia) is a place where Nature reigns supreme, an area which demonstrates possibilities and benefits of the coexistence of Nature and Man.

The South-Kamchatka Sanctuary named after Tikhon I. Shpilenok, having UNESCO World Heritage site status, preserves a pristine world of South Kamchatka. Its more than 3 thousand square kilometers are rarely seen by humans – except for a fortunate few thousand people each year, mostly brief visitors to the sanctuary's spectacular Kuril Lake.

Active volcanoes, valuable habitat for snow sheep and brown bear, coastal mating habitat for sea otters, spotted and harbor seals on the remote territories of

Utashud and Gavryushkin Kamen Islands and Cape Lopatka, almost untouched landscapes that display the unique natural complexity of the peninsula of Kamchatka and the southward-reaching Kuril island ridge – these are just parts of the extraordinary natural world protected by this splendid reserve.

The living heart of the South Kamchatka Sanctuary is volcano-flanked Kuril Lake – the largest spawning ground in Eurasia for sockeye salmon.

An average of about 1.7 million sockeye salmon arrive in the lake annually, after swimming upstream from the Pacific Ocean. The remnants of salmon left behind, even in the upper reaches of small streams, provides a broth of nutrients that support rich biodiversity throughout the lake basin. The most numerous predators on Kuril Lake are brown bears. The South Kamchatka Sanctuary nurtures the largest population of brown bears within any protected area in the world – about 950 individuals. The density of the population of brown bears in the basin of Kuril Lake is the highest in the world. Observations of these animals in their natural habitat are the basis of summer tourists programs in the South Kamchatka Sanctuary.

At the same time that the South Kamchatka Sanctuary is a haven for wildlife, it also plays a crucial role in the socio-economic development of adjacent settlements with a total population of about 2,500 people. The locals' way of life and economic well-being are based and fully depend

on fish resources, which are preserved and reproduced in the Kuril Lake basin, located in the Sanctuary.

In this remote and isolated area, people's lives and local economies depend upon the exploitation of natural resources, most importantly through fishing. Ecotourism development in areas such as this can add significantly to the otherwise limited range of economic opportunities; ecotourism can simultaneously raise the level of environmental awareness of the area's residents and offer them alternatives to poaching and other forms of illegal activity, which were registered quite often here during poaching crisis before 2007.

Thus, the socio-ecosystem of South Kamchatka is a unique area, demonstrating the relationship of the conservation of natural systems to the well-being of the local residents, including through the provision of concrete, "tangible" benefits. In 2016 the territory of the Sanctuary and nearby settlements became part of the the Global Network of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves as an example of the coexistence of Nature and Man.

The program, implemented by Kronotsky Federal Nature Biosphere Reserve in cooperation with local, regional and state research, educational and business organizations, includes several projects, aimed to harmonize relationships between people and nature and to enhance long-term prosperity of the whole socio-ecosystem of in the South Kamchatka.

By the moment the main idea of the program is realized through three on-going projects, focusing on issues of human-wildlife conflicts, ecological tourism and capacity building of local residents.

Brief projects Description

Bear tourism in South Kamchatka Sanctuary (Russia): visitors and wildlife monitoring project

The South Kamchatka Sanctuary provides habitat for what may be the world's largest population of brown bears (*Ursus arctos*) within a single protected area – about 950 individuals. Up to 300 bears can be found on the shores of Kuril Lake in the spawning season.

The density of the population of brown bears in the basin of Kuril Lake is the highest in the world. As a result, the Sanctuary nowadays is experiencing rapid growth in numbers of visitors and attracting more and more tourists and photographers from all over the world.



With growth in the numbers of tourists, it is becoming necessary to design mechanisms to provide appropriate visitor experiences that can protect vulnerable ecosystems and reduce the

negative impact of tourism. The basis for protection proposal of brown bears – key fauna species of the Sanctuary – are complex scientific studies, providing information on threats to protected species, the factors influencing the population and information for development of practical measures to protect them. The research project is focused on putting together conservation and visitors use interests – gathering knowledge needed to create tools to save the harmony of the place, to preserve this corner of the earth in its pristine form, to keep its animals wild, and to offer visitors the profound experience of bear viewing in natural habitats, or. It utilizes an interdisciplinary approach, including zoological studies of bear-human interactions and sociological studies of visitors' use. The research is conducted on a regular basis in the annual environmental monitoring

Bears and People in South Kamchatka – Essentials of Sharing One Home: education and capacity building of local residents

A newly implemented project on ecological education of residents from local villages, intends to minimize human-wildlife conflicts, raise level of environmental awareness of local communities and create economical incentives for local residents to bears conservation.



Project includes the following activities:

- studies of human-wildlife conflicts in villages;
- developing codes of living in bear country and keeping bears wild;
- developing school educational program about brown bears;
- implementing educational campaign on garbage keeping;
- working with administrations of settlements and fishing industries on issues of garbage keeping and utilization.

Sustainable tourism in South Kamchatka: education and capacity building of local residents

South Kamchatka is a remote and isolated area, where people's lives and local economies depend upon the exploitation of natural resources, most importantly through fishing.

Ecotourism development in areas such as this can raise the level of environmental awareness of the area's residents and offer them alternatives to poaching and other forms of illegal activity.



The project activities include:

- capacity building of local residents: trainings in interpretation of nature, project writing, guiding, keeping guest houses, running small local enterprises (in hospitality, craft producing, etc.);
- organizing annual field school “Young Interpretators of Nature” on the territory of the Sanctuary for children from local villages;
- developing new tourist routes connecting villages with the Sanctuary (struggling with “enclave tourism” and switching tourists numbers from overcrowded sites at Kuril Lake to other sites);
- promoting local tourist products;
- creating preferences for local guides for booking spots in the Sanctuary in high season.

Call for cooperation:

We are opened for cooperation with Organizations and specialists, having common issues. The most relevant directions of cooperation for 2019 are:

- Human-wildlife research specialists exchange in the field of human-brown bears conflicts, expertise in data procession and interpretation, participating foreign specialists in scientific field work and post-field data procession and interpretation;
- Developing ethics and safety codes for tourists and settlement residents, management recommendations and local standards in the field of minimizing bear-wildlife conflicts;
- Capacity building of local residents in the field of sustainable tourism, local communities involvement into conservation through development of ecologically and socially responsible tourist business and creating authentic local tourist products and services;
- Organizing educational events for local residents, aiming to minimize human-wildlife conflicts and raise the level of environmental awareness.

We will be glad to discuss any other suggestions and ideas, which could support our projects and help us make change!

Coordinator of the Programme:

Anya Zavadskaya, PhD, senior staff scientist of Kronotsky Federal Nature Biosphere Reserve,
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Scientific volunteering: call for volunteers for field season 2019

Brief project description

The South Kamchatka Federal Sanctuary named after Tikhon I. Shpilenok is a place where nature reigns supreme! Its more than 3 thousand square kilometers are rarely seen by humans – except for a fortunate few thousand people each year, mostly brief visitors to the sanctuary's spectacular Kuril Lake.

The Sanctuary provides habitat for what may be the world's largest population of brown bears (*Ursus arctos*) within a single protected area – about 950 individuals. Up to 300 bears can be found on the shores of Kuril Lake in the spawning season.

The density of the population of brown bears in the basin of Kuril Lake is the highest in the world. As a result, the Sanctuary nowadays is experiencing rapid growth in numbers of visitors and attracting more and more tourists and photographers from all over the world.



Our research project is focused on gathering knowledge needed to create tools to save the harmony of the place, to preserve this corner of the earth in its pristine form, to keep its animals wild, and to offer visitors the profound experience of communing with the wonderful world of nature. It utilizes an interdisciplinary approach, including zoological studies of bear-human interactions and sociological studies of visitors' use. Carried out during 2 field season, the research has become a part of annual recreation monitoring.

We invite researchers from all over the world to join our research team and participate in our annual bears and visitor use monitoring project in the South Kamchatka sanctuary, in basin of Kuril lake.

Place of volunteering:

basin of Kuril Lake, South Kamchatka Federal Sanctuary, Kamchatka, Russia

Opportunities and duties

This project provides opportunities for volunteers who wish to get involved in zoological and social-science research for a period not less than 3 weeks. Volunteers will be part of the team which is responsible to carry on the daily monitoring activities and surveys, as well as educational events.

Project activities, which you will be possibly involved in:

Zoological observations: daily observations of bear activities and interaction with visitors and disturbing factors on permanent walking routes and spots at the mouth of the spawning rivers, at campsite and research station, regular boat observations and countings along the perimeter of Kuril lake

Conservation social-scientific observations: counting of visitors, visitors use sociological surveys, controlling

Educational activities: educational work on ethics of observations with tourists (including specific work with Chinese visitors), lectures and workshops for local children and guides
Specific data processing: analysis and organizing of photo-identification images, analyzing images from photo-traps, GIS-analysis of collected data



Scientific observations are taken in groups of 2 people (one supervisor and his assistant) in three points of the basin at a time – totally our research group includes 6 people at a time, which are changing during the field season.

The daily routine of one volunteer usually includes tasks within one of the above field activities and field data processing. The majority of our volunteers are involved both in scientific (data collection and processing) and educational activities.

Training during the project

All our volunteers will be a part of the project team, benefiting from cultural and professional exchange – working together and communicating with our experts and also contributing the project with their knowledge and experience.

Volunteers will have the opportunity to take part in lots of discussions about humans-bear interactions, visitors use experience, essentials of coexistence in peace with wildlife and wilderness, peculiarities of recreational management in such special habitats as Kuril Lake is, etc. Unexperienced volunteers will be trained in monitoring methods and procedures before joining field staff.

Duration of volunteering:

Three weeks in the period from mid May till mid October.

Each volunteer should be able to stay in the field not less than 3 weeks. That's required because of difficult transport logistics, connected with remoteness of the research area, high cost and strong dependence of helicopter transportation on weather conditions.

Conditions of staying:

The base of our research team is the territory of Ozerniy campsite and rangers station on the bank of Kuril Lake in the South Kamchatka Sanctuary. The Sanctuary is an extremely remote and wilderness area without roads, centralized electricity and with no cell signal (the only way of connection is a satellite phone and limited satellite internet). The campsite – a piece of human space in the home of brown bears – has several facilities for Reserve staff and volunteers and is surrounded by electric fence.

Volunteers stay in a tent or 4 beds field simple room. Electricity is provided during the evening. The food cooking is centralized and provided by the Reserve cook. The weather of the South of Kamchatka is very changeable and chilly – even in the warmest months average daily temperature doesn't exceed + 18 °C; in the night it often drops below + 5 °C. Cold winds and rains, as well as morning fogs are frequent, so be ready, as observations are conducted daily in any weather.

Visa, accommodation, food and transport arrangements

The following expenditures are provided by the Reserve:

- staying on the territory of the Ozerniy campsite in a tent or 4 beds field simple room (WC outside);
- transportation by helicopter or off-road transport from Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky to the project area (the South Kamchatka Sanctuary) and back;
- food arrangements during staying in the field (centralized cooking);
- supplying with scientific field equipment and monitoring protocols;
- arranging official permissions for working in protected area and registration in Migration office on the arrival.

Volunteers are responsible themselves for the following costs and arrangements:

- Russian visa arrangements and costs (we can provide you with all the necessary information and advices);
- transport arrangements and costs on the way to Kamchatka peninsula;
- costs of staying in the city while waiting for the transportation to the field (20-30 euro a day in a hostel or 55–70 euro a day in a hotel in private room);
- food expenses (about 50 euros per person weekly). Food for field period is bought by volunteers according to the list from the cook of the Reserve.

Whom we are looking for: volunteer profile

We are seeking for both experienced and young but passionate professionals (zoologists and conservation social scientist), who are motivated to support our project, ready to share experience and gain new competencies, open to new ideas and approaches, some who have several skills in social and environmental projects and not afraid of severe weather conditions and 8 hours long observations. We expect from volunteers to be respectful, open-minded, to desire to volunteer in teamwork, as well as we want them to be responsible, autonomous and eager to take initiative.

Specific skills welcomed: licensed motor boat operating; knowing of the Chinese language, experience of work with data bases; GIS skills (ArcGIS)

More detailed directions, as well as list of required equipment and clothes will be provided after selecting the candidates.

How to apply

If you are interested, please send us an email with your CV, a covering letter (indicating your motivation, experience, desired period of volunteering) and also the name and the contact of your sending organization.

Deadline for applications is 1st of February 2019.

Please write to: Anya Zavadskaya, coordinator of the project and senior staff scientist of Kronotsky Federal Nature Biosphere Reserve, anya.zavadskaya@gmail.com