



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")

48, Ryabikova Street, Yelizovo, Kamchatka region, Russia, 684000.
tel: (41531)7-39-05, fax (41531)7-39-05
e-mail: zapoved@mail.kamchatka.ru, www.kronoki.ru

Scientific volunteering: call for volunteers for field season 2019

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

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 State Nature Biosphere Reserve, anya.zavadskaya@gmail.com