

Arctic Environment Ministers Meeting in Rovaniemi, Finland on 11-12 October 2018

Russia's input for the Arctic Environment Ministers Meeting

The Arctic belongs to the most vulnerable regions of the world. In order to preserve the unique ecosystems of the Arctic, the Russian Federation is making efforts in several areas, such as:

- minimization of negative impacts from human activity in the Arctic;
- protection of Arctic ecosystems;
- care for Protected areas etc.

The Russian Federation attaches great importance to the development of cooperation between the Arctic States on the protection of the Arctic environment and remains a responsible and reliable partner in the implementation of Agenda 2030 and the promotion of international development. The Russian Federation supports joint efforts to address the problems of air and water pollution, ecosystem degradation, waste management and the elimination of accumulated environmental damage.

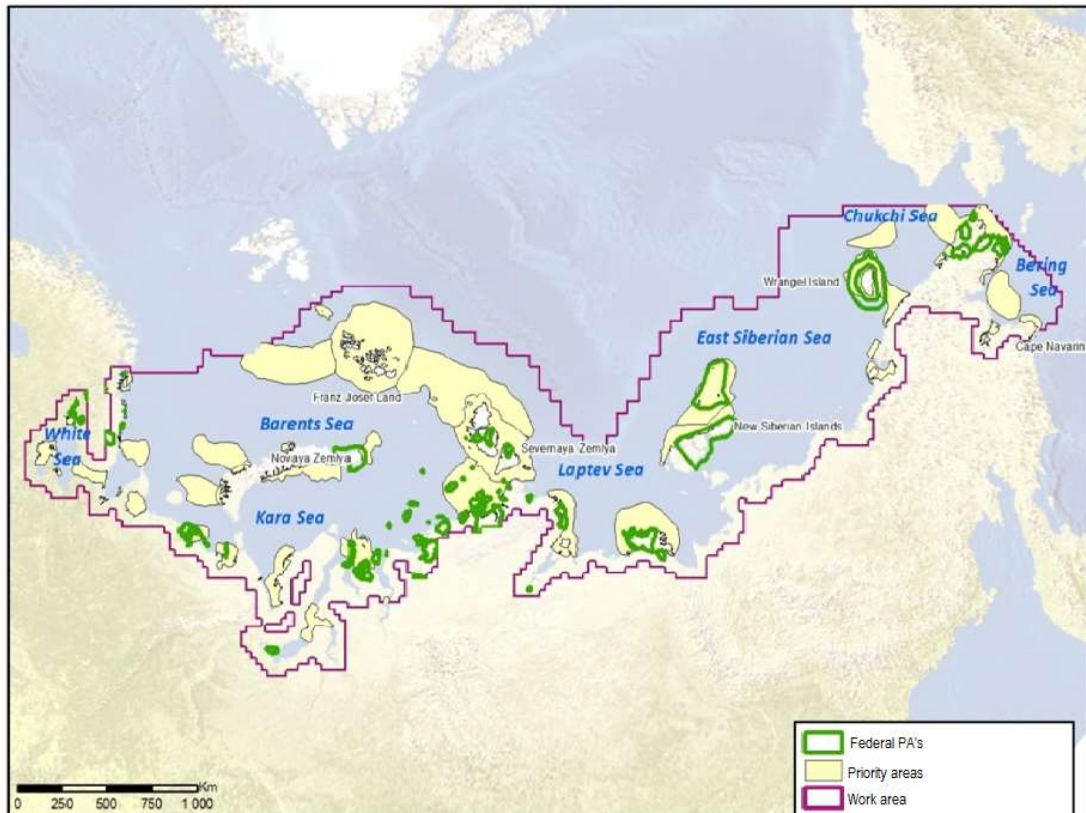
1. Allocation of the system of valuable marine areas of the Russian Arctic

The allocation of a system of valuable marine biodiversity in the Russian Arctic (sea GAP-analysis) has been completed. The system includes not only water areas that require marine protected areas creation, but also water areas where seasonal protecting/limiting measures for certain types of activities are necessary.

Russia is the first country of the Arctic Council, which carried out such work and applied a systemic approach immediately for the whole water area of the Arctic seas (Russian part), as a single natural system, including the White Sea, Barents Sea, Kara Sea, Laptev Sea, East Siberian Sea, partially Chukchi Sea and Bering Sea.

The survey covered an area of more than 600 million hectares (the area of the sea part is 400.61 million hectares).

As a result, the allocated system includes 47 districts with a total area of 114.511.700 hectares (24.8% of the area of the Russian Arctic seas). These areas are very different in size and proposed protecting/limiting measures for the certain types of use.



The basis of this analysis is criteria and requirements of international conventions, working groups and recommendations Arctic Council [1] (PAME, CAFF, LMA), CBD [2] (Aichi target 11, EBSAS [3]), IUCN [4])

According to the objectives of the high-priority protected marine areas network being developed, as the protected objects were chosen those which are characterizing the spatial distribution of biodiversity and ecosystems processes in the Arctic seas (range of species and individual populations, seasonal aspects, main habitats for rare and key species, diversity of ice, pelagic and near-bottom biotopes).

This system is designed taking into account climate change forecasts and region economic development prospects, and also taking into account the interests of the local people's related to the biological diversity use.

The method of allocation of valuable marine areas is fully developed by Russian scientists, presented and discussed at numerous international meetings and conferences. For mathematical analysis and system modeling the MARXAN soft was adapted (soft that was created specifically for marine protected areas spatial systems planning).

One of the important additional results of the work is the analysis of sufficiency and completeness of scientific data on the state of marine diversity or its individual elements. Based on this analysis, water areas and biodiversity elements, which require additional research in the future, were identified.

¹ http://www.pame.is/images/03_Projects/MPA/MPA_Report.pdf

² <https://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/rationale/target-11/>

³ <https://www.cbd.int/ebsa/about>

⁴ https://portals.iucn.org/docs/library/html/BP3%20Guidelines_for_marine_protected_areas/Pag-003/1.%20Placing%20Marine%20Protected%20Areas%20in%20their%20wider%20context.html

The project is implemented by experts from WWF Russia and Russian Academy of Sciences (A.N. Severtsov Institute of Ecology and Evolution, Institute of Geography, P.P. Shirshov Institute of Oceanology, Zoological Institute), Moscow State University, NGOs, federal protected areas, business, etc. The results of the project will largely ensure that the Russian Federation fulfills its international obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

2. Measures taken to preserve the valuable marine areas of the Russian Arctic

In 2017, the implementation of the developed scheme was started

- In 2018, a federal reserve "Novosibirsk Islands" was established. The area is 6.6 million hectares (of which the marine area is 4.9 million hectares). In the future it is planned to expand it to 12 million hectares.

The reserve is located on the archipelago of the Novosibirsk Islands (the islands of Anjou and the islands of De Long) and the adjacent water area of the Laptev Sea and the East Siberian Sea. The main goal of the reserve establishment is to preserve the island and marine ecosystems of the Russian Arctic, which are of great environmental and scientific importance. The natural complexes of the Novosibirsk Islands are typical for the Arctic as a whole, but they have their own uniqueness due to the proximity of the Great Siberian Polynya.

- The documentation on the creation of more than 10 million hectares of new marine protected areas, buffer zones and the expansion of existing PAs have been prepared or is now at various stages of approval.

- Work is underway to update the legal framework that allows to ensure the conservation of marine biodiversity by other measures (rather than the creation of PAs and the provided by law), for example, the creation of "marine mammal protection zones".

3. Creation of the terrestrial PAs system adapted to climate change in the Russian Arctic

In 2017, work was begun to ensure the conservation of biological diversity in the Russian Arctic, taking into account the impact of climate change and modern and promising socio-economic development of the region.

The first results obtained so far allow us to say that the Arctic ecosystems undergo significant changes under the influence of climate change. In particular, there is a movement of southern species of animals and plants to the north along the valleys of the meridional strike rivers, especially in Taimyr and Yakutia. There will also be progress to

the north of the boundaries of the forest-tundra and stlanic forests. Such changes are likely to lead to a decrease in the area of winter ungulate pastures and, pastures competition of wild and domestic reindeer.

Realizing the inevitability of the ongoing climate change, we set the task to develop and implement a system of territorial regulation of nature management in the Russian Arctic in order to preserve its unique biological diversity and preserve the traditional way of life for the indigenous population.

At the moment, documents have been prepared and are at different stages of agreement for the creation of new PAs that will help solve these problems.

Considering the effects of the climate change, during the AEMM Arctic Environment Ministers could have a possibility to discuss the ways to promote cooperation in the field of the Arctic marine environment protection.