

UDC [502.1+338.48-53](985)(045)]

DOI: 10.17238/issn2221-2698.2018.30.23

## Recreational nature management and tourism in the new development plans of the North of Russia \*

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**Abstract.** The article is devoted to the problems and prospects for the recreational nature management development in the Arctic in connection with the state “Strategy for the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation and National Security for the Period up to 2020”. The author considered modern trends in the development of cruise tourism, environmental problems of the Arctic and the task of embedding recreational and tourist activities in the complex re-development of the Arctic and the North. The result of the study is the conclusion about the expediency of integration of the tourist-recreational sphere into the complex project of social and economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation.

**Keywords:** *the Arctic, nature management, protection of the natural resources, national parks, the Northern Sea Route, cruise tourism.*

### Introduction

The main goal of this article is to draw attention to the development of recreational nature management and tourism in the Northern and Arctic areas of Russia, while implementing the strategy of integrated resource development in the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation. Recreational nature management and international tourism should find a worthy place in the local plans and projects of the state program-target management for the Arctic areas of the Russian Federation.

The Arctic includes extensive coastal areas, islands and seas of the Arctic Ocean. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, both in Russia and abroad, it has become a region of increased international attention, not only from perspective of extracting its natural resources and balancing the interests of indigenous people of the North, but also as a promising region for the development of transport, as a region that needs stronger environmental activities, advanced recreational use of nature and developed international tourism. In 2013, the Government of the Russian Federation adopted the “Strategy for the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation and National Security for the Period to 2020”. This strategy contains the following provisions: “... *development of the arctic tourism and expansion of the ecotourism in the Arctic, ... assistance to the local tourist clusters, promotion of the arctic tourism at the national and international markets*”<sup>1</sup>.

So, Russia has an urgent task of the complex use of the existing infrastructure and economic base in favor of the social and economic development of the polar territories, and it is also rele-

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\* For citation:

Sevastyanov D.V. Recreational nature management and tourism in the new development plans of the North of Russia. *Arktika i Sever* [Arctic and North], 2018, no. 30, pp. 18–32. DOI: 10.17238/issn2221-2698.2018.30.23

<sup>1</sup> Strategiya razvitiya Arkticheskoi Zony Rossiiskoi Federatsii do 2020 [Strategy for the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation until 2020]. URL: <http://government.ru/news/432> (Accessed: 25 December 2016) [In Russian].

vant for natural, ethnic, social, recreational and tourist resources of the Arctic. The modern sustainable development paradigm of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF), formulated by academician A.I. Tatarkin, should be based on a systematic approach to the integrated use of resources of the reference zones of the North, to the preservation of traditional lifestyles of indigenous minorities and unique Arctic ecosystems. It is rightly emphasized that it is necessary to comply with the environmental imperative in the development of the Arctic, which means an unconditional priority of environmental safety over the economic benefits of the development of territories, the need to calculate the environmental capacity of the territories when placing production, taking into account the interests of indigenous people and activities aimed at preserving the biodiversity of the Arctic territories [1, Tatarkin A.I., p. 339]. Such an approach contains an idea of “the re-development of the Russian Arctic” through the integration of the current “regional projects and development programmes for the territorial units of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation in the interest of achieving common goals of the Arctic megaproject” [2, Leksin V.N., Porfirev B.N., p. 9]. Proposals aimed at forming the “Arctic portfolio of projects” not only at the Federal, but also at the regional and municipal levels, the introduction of an integrated project approach to the management of the socio-economic development of the Russian Arctic, the organization of the public movement “Arctic Exploration” as a mega-project supporting the “living resource” and the competitiveness of our country, put forward by Yu.F. Lukin [3, p. 80] and V.P. Fedorov [4, pp. 1–6]. It remains to add that the recreational nature management in the Arctic, aimed at the preservation of the Arctic environment and the organization of specially protected natural areas (SPNA), the development of nature-oriented forms of tourism is no less important strategic direction of development than the extractive industries of the economy.

### ***Modern tendencies of the nature management in the Arctic***

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the economic interests of many countries of the world crossed in the Arctic region. It was mainly Russia, the USA and Canada, as well as the Nordic countries: Iceland, Norway (with Spitsbergen), Denmark (with Greenland), Finland and Sweden. All these countries relate to the Arctic due to their geographical location, development history, science, economics and politics. They are interested in the rational use of the natural resources of the Arctic region. These countries are the main participants of the Arctic Council, established in 1998 for the good purpose of joint regulation of environmental management in the Arctic latitudes.

Russia has the longest shoreline in the Arctic seas (over 20,000 km) and the largest sector of the adjacent seas of the Arctic Ocean (AO), extending to the North Pole. This area also has the largest reserves of minerals in the Arctic sector, including about 105 billion tons equivalent fuel (Fig.1). The current economic and political interests of Russia in using the Arctic resources are obvious. The shelf waters of the AO seas, adjacent to the territory of Russia, are seasonally free from ice. They are of a great economic value, since this is not only an area of possible bio and hydrocarbon resources extraction, but also an area for navigation along the Northern Sea Route (NSR). At

present, the significance of the North for the economy of the Arctic states is determined, first, by its richest natural resources and its raw material potential. Therefore, the priorities of the economic development in the Arctic are primarily related to the extractive industries and the gradual development of transport, focused on the export of extracted raw materials. In the Arctic and northern areas of Russia, the bulk of non-ferrous and rare metals, gold and etc. provide up to 60% of the country's exports. According to the Rosstat, the Russian North provides 15-20% of the total GRP of the federal budget. Here, 72% of all oil and gas condensate is extracted; 93% of natural gas; almost all diamonds, and 37% of commercial timber are harvested. 90% of nickel and over 65% of copper are mined in the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF) and transported through the NSR. The contribution of the Arctic zone to total exports of Russia in the NSR is almost 25% [5; 6]. In addition, cruise trips of tourists from different countries to the North Pole and islands of the Arctic Ocean from Murmansk are now carried out. The potential volume of cargo transit through the NSR is estimated at 8–12 million tons per year. Cruise Arctic tourism along the NSR could be a significant contribution to the rational use of the Arctic resources [5, Dodin D.A. et al.; 7].

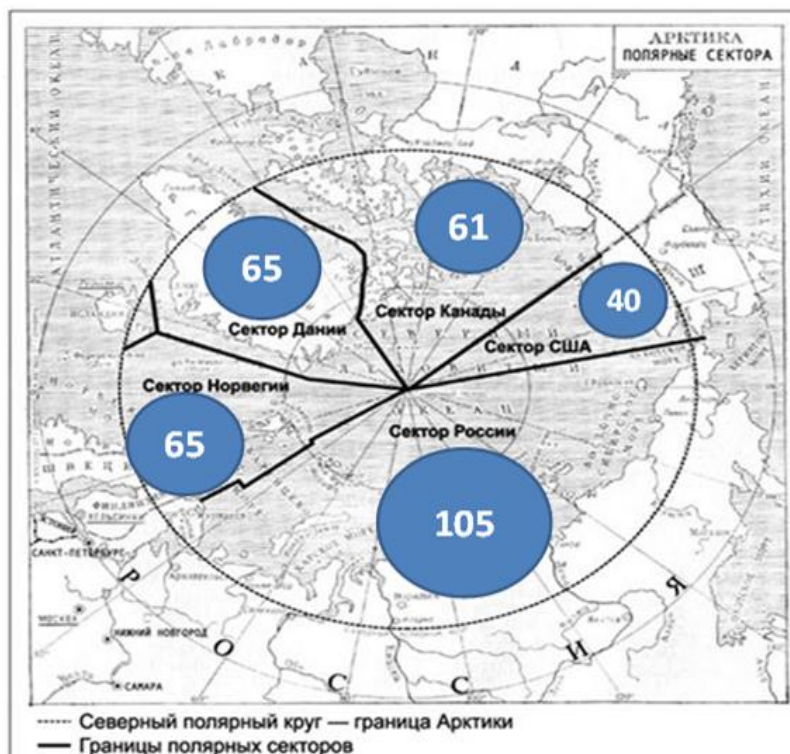


Fig. 1. Common hydrocarbon reserves in the national sectors of the major state of the Arctic region (in billion tons of equivalent fuel) [5, Dodin D.A. et al.]. Russia has the biggest reserves.

Russia is a northern, Arctic country with the widest sector of access to the Arctic Ocean and the largest area of the Arctic and polar landscapes in the world. The presence of our country in the Arctic is due to historical, scientific, economic and strategic reasons. Almost 16 thousand kilometers of the Russian Federation state border pass through the Arctic latitudes. The protection of the northern borders of the country and the rational use of natural resources of the Arctic are a task of national importance. In modern conditions, the rational nature management in the Russian Arctic should be based on the ecological imperative, accounting the climate change, protection of the

natural resources from pollution and depletion. Against the backdrop of the escalating struggle for Arctic resources, the environmental factor acquires special significance for ensuring strategic national interests and sustainable social and economic development of the northern territories of the Russian Federation. For Russia, which has access to the water areas of the 7 seas in the Arctic sector, there are the most favorable prospects for the use of the NSR, ensuring its safety, supporting commercial shipping and organizing international cruise arctic tourism.

The United States, Canada, the Nordic countries also have their own geographic sectors in the Arctic. The states defend their economic and political interests in the region, rich with biore-sources and oil and gas reserves, and are increasingly using the natural resources of the Arctic. Among the non-Arctic countries, China, Japan, South Korea and even India are increasingly showing their scientific and commercial interests to the Arctic.

China is actively introducing itself into the Arctic: it regularly conducts scientific research using its "Xue Long" diesel icebreaker and it has already started to carry out sea transportation along the NSR. Since 1999, the National Arctic Research Expedition has operated in China. It has already carried out eight large scientific missions in the Arctic on the icebreaker "Xue Long". The country has two research polar stations in Iceland and Norway. In 2003, in Ny-Ålesund (Spitsbergen), the Chinese scientific research Arctic station "Yellow River" was organized. China plans to use this station as a basis for the future tourist cluster and cruise Arctic tourism<sup>2</sup>.

China received the status of an observer state in the Arctic Council in 2012 (Norway, Iceland, Denmark, Sweden, Canada, Finland, the USA and Russia are the member-states) and significantly intensified its research in the Arctic. In the same year, within the framework of the agreement with Russia, the icebreaker "Xue Long" passed along the Northern Sea Route and the Russian coastline and reached Iceland. In 2013, the China-Nordic Arctic Research Center was organized in Shanghai to support scientific, economic and tourist initiatives in the Arctic. The Chinese government established the Arctic and Antarctic Administration (CAA), responsible for scientific programs, and it is gradually increasing its activity. In 2016, China launched a new research icebreaker — "Xue Long 2". In August 2016, the first joint Arctic Russian-Chinese research was made in the exclusive economic zone of the Russian Federation in the Arctic Ocean. The export potential of the Chinese economy increases, and China has recently transformed (since 2010) into the world's first exporting power. The Chinese leadership realizes the benefits of developing trade links across the Arctic seas, incl. scientific research and tourism in the Arctic<sup>3</sup>.

Consequently, in the foreseeable future, the NSR will inevitably pass from the status of the national project to the category of the most important international one, capable of providing Russia's strategic economic interests.

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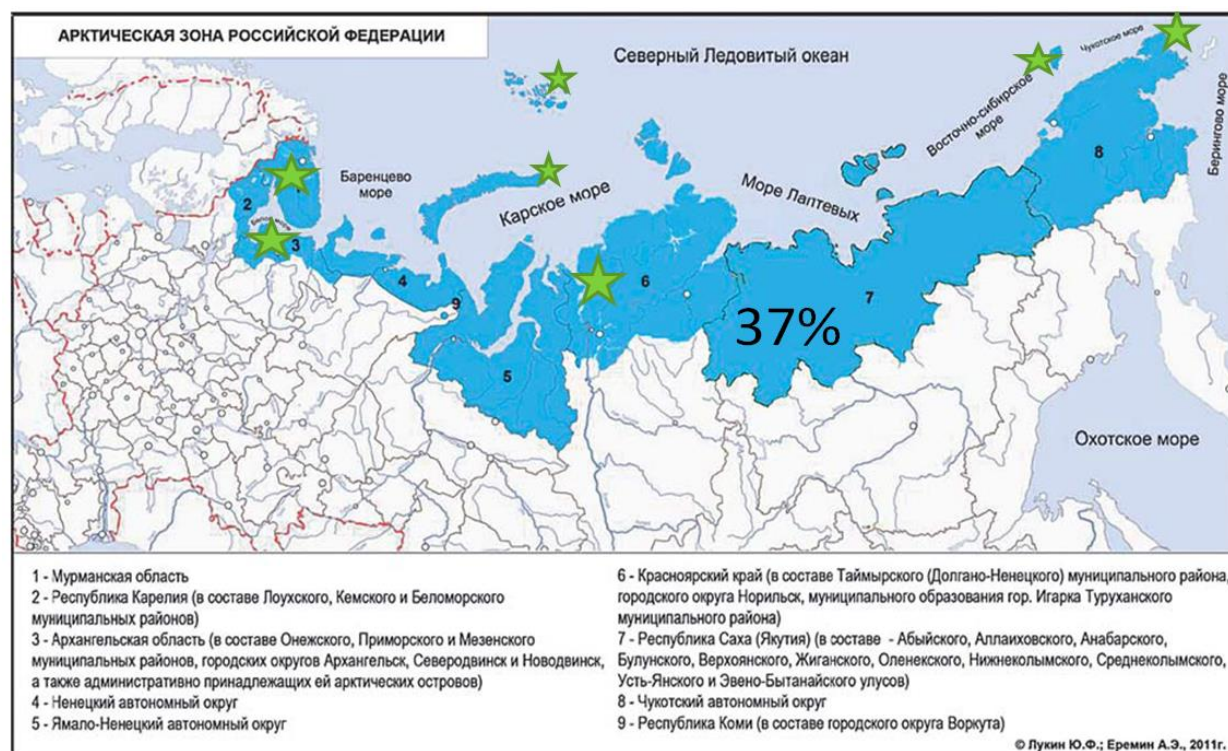
<sup>2</sup> Romanova K. Kitajskij biznes idet v arktiku. [Chinese business goes to the Arctic]. URL: <http://www.gazeta.ru/business/2014/05/16/6037137.shtml> (Accessed: 10 March 2016). [In Russian]

<sup>3</sup> Kitaj v arktike. [China in the Arctic]. URL: <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/2260803.html> (Accessed: 10 December 2017). [In Russian]



The Arctic zone in the Russian Federation is, in nature, an extremely severe region. The islands and seaside of the Arctic Ocean are dominated by the Arctic and subarctic climate, the landscapes of the arctic deserts (with fragmented vegetation) and the tundra zone (plains and mountains). Along the southern border of the Russian Arctic, fragments of the forest-tundra zone and the northern taiga appear. In this sector, the area of the Arctic seas reaches 6.8 million km<sup>2</sup>, and the length of the northern coast of the Russian Federation is more than 22,600 km. This difficult-to-access and exotic region is attractive from the perspective of its resources, industrial and economic potential and from the recreational nature management point of view, for the existence of specially protected areas (SPAs): national parks and reserves as recreational and tourism facilities. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Russian Arctic got such large recreational sites as the Kandalaksha Reserve and the NP "Khibiny" on the Kola Peninsula, the NP "Onezhskoe Pomorye" on the Onega Peninsula of the White Sea, and the NP "Russkaya Arktika" on the northern tip of the Novaya Zemlya Island, the Federal Wildlife Sanctuary on the Franz Josef Land, the unified Taimyr Reserve, the NP "Wrangel Island", the cluster NP "Beringia" in Chukotka (Fig. 2). Further recreational development of these Arctic natural areas will create the opportunity to use them as objects of ecotourism for the cruises along the NSR.

As it is known, in Russia, almost 20% of the territory is located to the north of the Arctic Circle. But if we account the lands referred to the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation by the Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 296 of 02.05.2014, the size of this region extends to 37% of Russia's area<sup>4</sup> (Fig. 2).



<sup>4</sup> Lukin Yu.F. Rossijskaya arktika v izmenyayushhemsya mire. [Russian Arctic in a changing world]. Arkhangelsk. 2012 URL: [https://narfu.ru/aan/Russian\\_Arctic\\_Lukin](https://narfu.ru/aan/Russian_Arctic_Lukin) (Accessed: 25 December 2014). [In Russian]

Fig. 2. The map of the RF Arctic Zone<sup>5</sup>. The RF Arctic Zone (with landscape and climate conditions) is beyond the Arctic Circle and makes 37% of the territory of the Russian Federation. The stars mark the main SPAs of the Arctic Zone

Incl.: The Murmansk Oblast, The Republic of Karelia (incl. Loykhskiy, Kemskiy and Belomorskiy municipal areas), The Arkhangelsk Oblast (incl. Onezhskiy, Primorskiy and Mezenskiy municipal areas, the town districts of Arkhangelsk, Severodvinsk and Novodvinsk and legally adjacent islands), The Nenets Autonomous District, Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District, Krasnoyarskiy Krai (incl. Taimyr (Dolgano-Nenets) municipal area, town district of Norilsk, Igarka municipality of the Turukhanskiy municipal area), The Republic of Sakha (Yakutiya) (incl. Abiiskiy, Allabkhsevskiy, Anabarskiy, Bulunskiy, Verkhoyanskiy, Zhiganskiy, Olenekskiy, Nizhnekolimskiy, Srednekolimskiy, Ust-Yanskiy and Eveno-Bytanskiy ulus), Chukotka Autonomous District, The Komi Republic (incl. the town district of Vorkuta)

One of the most important incentives for the modern activation of international economic and recreational activities in the Arctic region of the planet is undoubtedly the warming of the Arctic climate and the softening of the ice conditions in the seas of the Arctic Ocean, observed in recent decades. Researchers note that the ice cover of the Arctic is pulsating. According to Roshydromet, since the early 1980s, a significant seasonal reduction in sea ice has been recorded annually. This process was quickly accelerated in the late 1990s and reached the maximum values in 2007 (4.3 million km<sup>2</sup>), then in 2012 (3.41 million km<sup>2</sup>), and in 2016 (4.1 million km<sup>2</sup>). Thus, an increasing area of polar ice disappears in the summer time and frees the northern seas for navigation. According to the data of the Arctic sea ice cover monitoring carried out by AARI specialists: as of December 2014, the area of the polar ice cap in the Arctic Ocean was 11.67 million km<sup>2</sup>, which is 4.2% less than the average multi-year norm. In the Eastern sector of the Arctic: Laptev Sea, East Siberian, Chukchi, Bering and Okhotsk seas, the ice area was less than the average multi-year value by 7.9%. In December 2017, the total area of sea ice in the Arctic Ocean 11.75 million km<sup>2</sup> <sup>6,7</sup>.

Different points of view on the future of the ice situation in the Arctic exist. Supporters of the directed warming theory advocate the further reduction of the ice cover in the Arctic until its complete disappearance by the end of this century. According to other experts who study the cycles of climate change: the current climate system is in a bifurcation point, and, in the coming years, a tendency towards cooling and ice growth in the Arctic may appear. In any case, at the present stage and in the foreseeable future, it is advisable to increase the icebreaker fleet and strengthen the infrastructure of the Northern Sea Fleet.

The Arctic navigation shows that ensuring year-round safety in the NSR depends on powerful icebreakers able to navigate through the ice and escort vessels even in summer. At the same time, the difficulties associated with navigation in high latitudes are obvious: long, severe winters and heavy ice, which does not completely disappear even in the warmest months of the year. Navigation of freight and cruise ships through heavy ice in winter is possible only with the help of ice-

<sup>5</sup> Ibid with the authors adds.

<sup>6</sup> Global Sustainable Development Report, 2015 edition. Advance Unedited version. URL: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1758GSDR%202015%20Advance%20Unedited%20Version.pdf> (Accessed: 10 February 2016).

<sup>7</sup> National Snow & Ice Data Center, Arctic Sea Ice News & Analysis, 2016. URL: <http://nsidc.org/arcticseaicenews> (Accessed: 01 December 2016).

breakers but it is a complex and very expensive exercise. The icebreaker fleet of the Russian Federation, which is currently in operation, has 6 nuclear-powered icebreakers: four heavy icebreakers of the “Arktika” class and two “Taimyr” class icebreakers with less draft and five diesel-electric icebreakers. One nuclear icebreaker “50 Years of Victory” equipped with cabins for tourists, as well as the atomic icebreaker “Vaigach” [8, Ruksha V.V. et al., p. 29] are actively used for wiring of vessels and for cruise tourism. In Russia, the presence of the most powerful icebreaking fleet makes it possible to realize the opportunities for the development of minerals on the shelf and to provide perspectives for the continuous use of the Northern Sea Route (NSR) along the Eurasian coast in the framework of regional, national and international projects. This opens new opportunities for the development of the nature conservation and tourist-recreational activities in the polar latitudes. The icebreaking fleet and the global climate warming provide the access to the ports located at the NSR – Sabetta and Novy Port in the mouth of the Ob River; Dixon, Dudinka and Igarka on the Yenisei River; the Tiksi Port at the mouth of the Lena River, etc. These ports built in the Soviet era, require significant reconstruction, but they maintain coastal navigation in the “river-sea” system in the summer, serve as points for reloading mineral resources and wood, being the reference point and the center of life along the NSR [8, Ruksha V.V. et al., pp. 32–35].

In accordance with the modern paradigm of the complex “reassessment” of the Arctic, reorganization of the NSR and the development of supporting regions should stimulate the formation of tourist and recreational centers and cruise tourist service centers, the number of which will only grow in the Arctic. Recreative use of nature along the NSR relates to the organization of new national parks and reserves, attractive for cruise tourists and the identification and inclusion of new attractive tourist objects in tourist activity. An important aspect is the creation of new jobs and the active involvement of representatives of local indigenous peoples in environmental and tourist activities. It is necessary to emphasize that, unlike the resource-producing industrial nature management that prevails in the Arctic, recreational nature management does not have such a devastating impact on the environment, but, on the contrary, contributes to the protection of nature and the formation of an ecological outlook among tourists and the local population. The modern research on recreational nature management in the Arctic latitudes should be aimed at identifying and studying the remaining unique corners of nature and objects associated with the history of development of the northern territories of Eurasia with the goal of creating new SPAs and preserving the nature of the Arctic.

It should be accounted that favorable prospects for the development of navigation in the Arctic seas, ice-free in the summer, promise great economic benefits, but increase the danger of growth of pollution caused by the extractive industry. Therefore, the development of the maritime transport system in the North of Russia and regular navigation along the NSR should be accompanied by the creation of an independent special state service for the environmental monitoring of the Arctic environment under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology.

*Development of recreation and tourism in foreign countries*

It should be specially noted that in recent years the water areas of the Arctic seas have been increasingly used not only for fishing and cargo transportation, but also for cruise arctic tourism. North of the Arctic countries start to bring a considerable economic benefit from its geographical position in relation to the growth of the tourists' interest to the harsh arctic landscape, natural, historical and cultural sites and other polar attractions. The most attractive objects for tourism in the Arctic are natural objects: exotic islands, glaciers, fjords, rocks, cliffs, waterfalls and icebergs, bird bazaars, sea animals, whales and polar bears, minerals, aurora etc. Tourist interests could be represented by memorable objects related to geographic discoveries and the history of the Arctic exploration. It is noteworthy that the Arctic tourism in the US, Canada, Greenland, Iceland and Norway develops with substantial state support and brings considerable profit. E.g., according to the UNWTO (2010), Alaska in the US earns up to 3.4 billion dollars in tourism, and Canada — 6.5 billion dollars a year. A sharp increase is observed in the number of tourists visiting Greenland: in the early 1990's the territory was visited by about 3,500 people per year, and in 2011 — almost 65,000 people a year. Thus, over 20 years, the tourist flow has increased by more than 18 times, exceeding the number of residents — Inuit and Danes (Fig.3). [6 Sevastyanov et al., pp. 91–92].

The other area of the Arctic with similar dynamics is Iceland. Its number of international visitors increased by more than 4 times. Norwegian Svalbard — 3 times. In other regions of the overseas Arctic (Alaska, Canadian Archipelago) the growth rates were comparable with the world average and amounted to 42 to 84% respectively. In general, in 2010 the number of tourists who visited the foreign Arctic and the circumpolar regions (excl. Russia) exceeded 700 thousand people [9, Sevastyanov et al., p. 485].

After a surge in the activity of Arctic tourism in 2006-2007, in all high-latitude regions there was a drop in the number of visitors. The acute phase of the economic crisis (2008–2009) seriously affected the dynamics of tourism in the Arctic. However, in 2012–13, in the Svalbard archipelago (Norway) and Iceland, there was a significant increase in the number of tourists. At the same time, in Alaska and Greenland, according to these indicators, there was a decline in visits (Figure 3).

The peak of the tourist flow to the Arctic falls on the summer months from June to September. It is especially typical for sea cruises, determined by the possibility of navigation. The air accessibility of Alaska, Greenland, Iceland and Spitsbergen smoothest the seasonality of visits, and the participation of residents in the use of tourist infrastructure at other times of the year makes it possible to ensure its minimum load in winter [10, Maher P.T., p. 53].



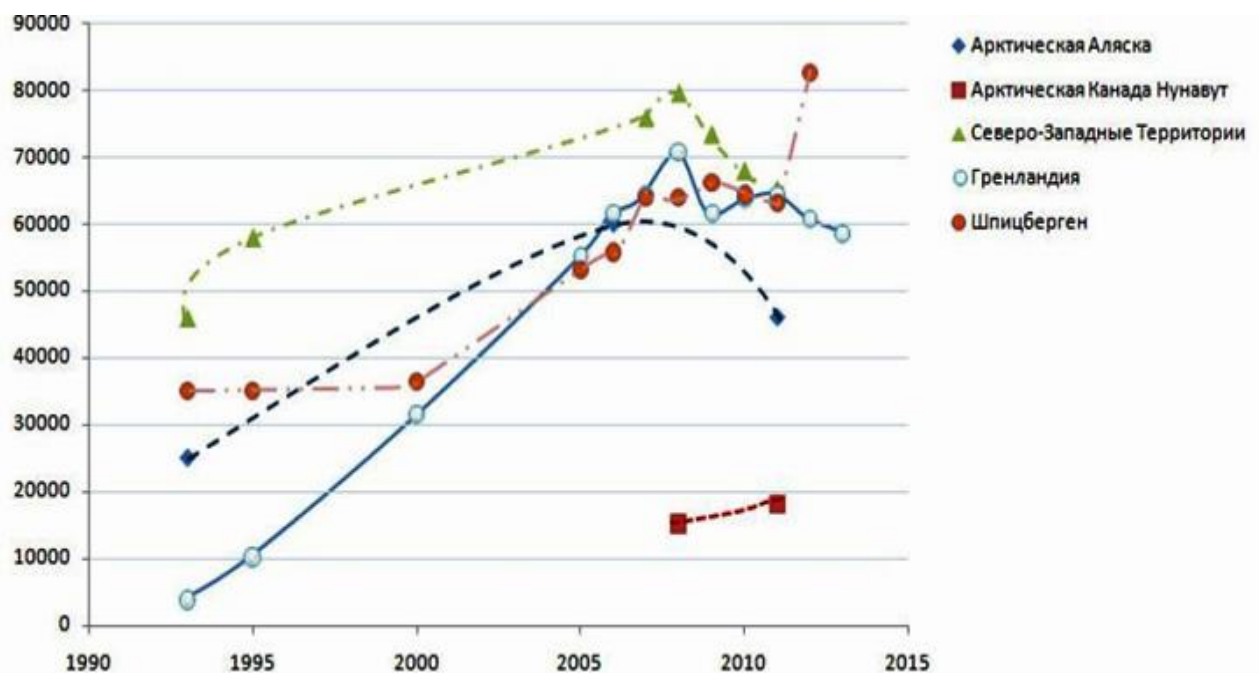


Fig. 3. Dynamics of tourist visits to the foreign Arctic zone [14]. The Arctic Alaska, the Arctic Canada Nunavut, North-West territories, Greenland, Spitsbergen.

It should be noted that the growth of anthropogenic impact on the Arctic landscapes and their vulnerability necessitates the scientific support of the Arctic tourism development programs that provide the sustainability of landscapes and their protection. E.g., Canadian experts identified the negative impacts of tourism on ecosystems: soil erosion and destruction of vegetation cover along the hiking routes, the digression of landscapes in places of tourist attractions, and anthropogenic pollution near the airports and marinas that reduce the attractiveness of tourist locations. According to Canadian researchers, in the Arctic, we should pay special attention to the control and regulation of tourist flows, minimizing the impact of tourism on the living conditions of indigenous peoples [10, Maher P.T., pp. 58–59].

Currently, one of the most visited areas of the Arctic is the Spitsbergen archipelago, located in the zone of the warm Gulf Stream influence. Cruise ships have been visiting Svalbard since 1870. The increase in the number of cruise tours in the 21st century increases in the anthropogenic impact on the nature of the islands. In accordance with the Regulations on tourist and excursion activities on Svalbard, the priority is to minimize the anthropogenic impact on the environment. Here is a special administrative zone number 10, which includes all the settlements of Spitsbergen, both Norwegian and Russian. In fact, this is the only visiting area, where the free stay of tourists and tourist groups is allowed without special registration. In addition to studying the anthropogenic pressure on landscapes, environmental services pay much attention to the “social load” for the local population. Also, a certain need to study the needs of visitors exists. It should be combined with the behavior study and a study of affects and forms of loads. Svalbard has been visited by 70–80 thousand people annually. About 80% of them are Norwegians and citizens of the other Scandinavian countries. Usually the visitors are in Longyearbyen. Russian settlement Barentsburg is less popular among tourists due to the inadequacy of the infrastructure. Although the territory where

the Russian settlements are located falls within the administrative zone No. 10. However, in recent years, Barentsburg experienced the growth in the number of visitors due to the short excursions (2–3 thousand people per year; among them — 20–30 Russian tourists). At the same time, the greatest influx of tourists at a local hotel is observed in the spring-summer period, from April to August [11, Korostelev E.M., Biletsky A.V., p. 13].

### *The Arctic tourism in the development strategy of the polar areas of Russia*

It should be emphasized that in 2012 the Russian Federation adopted the State Program for the Development of Tourism in the Russian Federation for 2013–2020, which approves the priority of the inbound and home tourism, compare to the outbound tourism, and relies on the “Development Strategy of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation until 2020”, which, in particular, provides the opportunity to create regional tourist clusters and promote the Arctic tourism at the national and international markets<sup>8</sup>.

The experience of the neighboring Arctic countries shows that rational environmental management, development of transport and hotel infrastructure should be the basis for the formation of tourist clusters in the Arctic. It is planned to use the protected areas of the Arctic region – national parks and reserves to carry out nature-oriented types of tourism and environmental education of recreators. An indispensable condition for the development of the Arctic tourism is the factor of international partnership and cooperation to ensure the safety of tourism in the Arctic and the transport for the Arctic travel. An example is the “Public-Private Partnership in Tourism in the Barents Region” (BART), mentioned by Yu.F. Lukin in his article on concepts and approaches to tourism in the Arctic [12, Lukin Yu.F., p. 61].

Analyzing the development trends of recreation and tourism in the northern and arctic areas of Russia, one cannot note the expansion of the network of national parks and reserves in recent years. First, this is the opening of the new SPAs: the NP “Russian Arctic”, united with the reserve “Franz Josef Land” in the Barents Sea; the NP “Onezhskoe Pomorie” on the Onega Peninsula of the White Sea; the cluster NP “Beringia”, located in Chukotka and Alaska, as well as reserves on the peninsula of Taimyr and on Wrangel Island. These SPAs are located within the accessibility of the NSR, which makes them attractive for cruise tourism in the Arctic seas.

One important event for the preservation of the nature of the Arctic and the development of recreational nature management in the polar latitudes happened in 2009: The Decree on the creation of the largest national park in the Russian North was signed. The national park “Russian Arctic” at the northern part of the Severniy island, the Novaya Zemlya archipelago, including the Large and Small Oranskiy Islands, Loshkin island and several other islands. The national park “Russian Arctic” is also managing the state nature reserve of federal significance – Franz Josef Land (FJL), which since 2016 is a part of the NP “Russian Arctic”. The area of the NP “Russian Arctic” is

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<sup>8</sup> Strategiiia razvitiia Arkticheskoi zony Rossiiskoi Federatsii do 2020 g. [Development Strategy of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation until 2020] URL: <http://government.ru/news/432/> (Accessed: 25 December 2016). [In Russian]

14 260 km<sup>2</sup>, but together with the FJL reserve with its area of 42,000 km<sup>2</sup>, they make up one of the largest protected natural areas of the planet [13, Gavrilov M.V., p. 23]. The most important task of the national park is the preservation of biological diversity and the maintenance of the protected Arctic natural complexes, as well as the development of tourism within the jurisdictional territories. The main problem with this is a serious threat to the destruction of the vulnerable Arctic nature, cultural and historical objects located on the islands.

In the FJL archipelago, on the Bell island, there is the house of “Eyre” — the site of the British explorer Arctic Benjamin Lee Smith, named in memory of the yacht “Eyre”, crushed by ice at Cape Flora in 1881. The main object of tourist interest on the island of Hooker is “Tikhaya Bay” — the place of G.Ya. Sedov’s expedition wintering in 1913–1914. The same place — a colony of sea birds more than 10 000 pairs (*Fulmarus glacialis*, *Alca alle*, *Uria lomvia* and *Rissa tridactyla*). No less interesting is Champ island in the central part of the archipelago. Unique stone formations of an ideally round shape, known as spherulites. Southeast of Champ island is Hall Island, the southern point of which is Cape Tegethoff. The camp of the Austro-Hungarian expedition of J. Payer (1874) was located there? As well as the wintering remains of the expedition of the American journalist Walter E. Wellman (1898–1899). On the rocky slope of the island, there is an object of tourist interest of a geological nature — the dolerite dike of the Tegethoff cape.

According to news agencies, in 2013, 636 tourists from 35 countries visited the “Russian Arctic” national park. About 30% of them are Chinese citizens, the next is the US and Switzerland is the third. In 2014, 738 persons visited the territory of the NP “Russian Arctic” and the federal reserve “Franz Josef Land” (FJL), and in the summer of 2015 — 1,225 people (70% increase). 32% of tourists were representatives of China, about 10%—citizens of the Russian Federation [14, Ershov R.V., p. 118]. In 2016, the cruise visit of the “Russian Arctic” decrease, but in 2017 it exceeded the amount of one thousand tourist arrivals.

The dynamics of tourist visits of the NP “Russian Arctic” is presented in Table. 1.

Table 1

*The dynamics of tourist visits of the NP “Russian Arctic”*

Years	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Number of tourists	865	1005	636	738	1225	954	1142

According to a report of the NP “Russian Arctic”, in 2015, 7 of 11 cruises in the Arctic Seas, were sent to the North Pole on the nuclear-powered icebreaker “50 Years of Victory” and visited FJL; 3 — on the ship “Sea Spirit” along the route Spitsbergen — Franz Josef Land — Spitsbergen; and the cruise ship “Bremen” passed along the Northern Sea Route with visits to Cape Zhelaniya (Novaya Zemlya) and Franz Josef Land. Thus, the development of cruise travel and the growth in the number of tourists will increase the recreational load on the Arctic islands. It has already worried the nature protection service of the reserve. Despite small number of tourists, recreational digression has been already observed in places of tourist landings on the islands, due to trampling

of soils on excursion routes and disturbance of soil and vegetation cover. Research and calculations of the ecological capacity and justification of visits are becoming more and more popular [15, Chizhova V.P., p. 19].

At the same time, the Norwegian archipelago Spitsbergen, which is almost at the same latitude, is visited by tens of thousands of tourists annually. Back in the early 1990s, increase in the recreational loads on the islands pushed experts and the public to develop approaches to regulating the tourist flow. The method was called “local management plans for the territory”. It includes information on valuable sites, scientifically based zoning of sites in the areas of tourist impact and a map of the area.

Many experts have already addressed the issue of assessing the loads and regulating tourism in the NP “Russian Arctic”. Nevertheless, if we talk about the development of ecologically safe tourism, then we should have systematic studies: monitoring of environmental changes, reasonable arrangement of trails, management decisions on regulation of recreational loads on the Arctic landscapes, as many experts point out [11; 15]<sup>9</sup>.

The NP “Onezhskoe Pomorie”, formed in 2013, is located at the northern tip of the Onega Peninsula, which extends into the White Sea, 40 km from the famous Solovetsky Islands. The area of the national park is 201 668 hectares, incl. lands, forest and waters. The creation of the NP “Onezhskoe Pomorie” is aimed at preserving the northern taiga and historical and cultural sites on the Onega Peninsula of the Arkhangelsk Oblast. This concerns rare and endangered animals and plants, listed in the “Red Book” of the Russian Federation, unique massifs of seaside old-growth taiga forests, as well as the culture and lifestyle of the Pomor people of the Russian North. The Onega Peninsula is a place of mass accumulations of waterfowl and near-water migratory birds during the spring and autumn migrations. Unskaya Bay meets the criteria for identifying wetlands of international importance and is included in the list of key ornithological territories of the Russian Federation.

The peculiarity of the national park is the presence of marine and forest protection zones, indigenous north-taiga forests, reaching the very shore of the sea, coastal dunes, numerous and diverse lakes, marshes and rivers. Glacial deposits create unusual stone piles; megaliths are found there. On the seashore one can find rookeries of the White Sea seals, belugas, sometimes moose, brown bears and wolves. The historical and cultural heritage on the territory of the NP “Onezhskoe Pomorie” is represented by several ancient wooden churches and chapels in the Pomor villages, ancient worship and vow crosses, and old beacons attractive for tourists. However, most wooden buildings require restoration. Therefore, the NP “Onezhskoe Pomorie” is extremely prudent for organizing ecological and historical and cultural tourism. The location of the NP “Onezhskoe Pomorie” is in the neighborhood (40 km from the White Sea) from the well-known tourist

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<sup>9</sup> Kak sovместit turizm i okhranu okruzhaiushchei sredy v Arktike. [How to combine tourism and environmental protection in the Arctic] WWF Report. URL: <http://www.panda.org/resources/inthefield/arctic> (Accessed: 21 February 2016). [In Russian]

destination — the Solovetsky Islands. In our opinion, it is a positive aspect for the further development of tourism and recreational activities, based on cruise tourism in the White Sea. In 2016, this national park was transferred to the administrative department of the NP "Kenozersky" in connection with the tragic death of the director of the Onega Pomorye NGO O. Prodan in a plane crash<sup>10</sup>.

The National Park "Beringia" located in the north-eastern part of the Chukota Peninsula. It is declared as an international national park, planned jointly with the natural reserve in Alaska (the USA) "Bering Land Bridge". The decree on the creation of the national park "Beringia" was signed on January 17, 2013. The Russian part of the park is represented by several clusters on the peninsula of Chukotka on a total area of 18,194 km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>11</sup> The project of this international (or transboundary) national park appeared in the late 1980s. It is regarded as an ancient unified historical-geographical region, the so-called "Beringia" - an extensive part of the land, which, 12—15 thousand years, ago united Eurasia and North America. This land connection is now the Bering Strait. The symbolic role in the linking the two continents became the main idea of the co-building of the International National Park "Beringia". Visiting this corner of the Arctic is advisable to plan in connection with the development of cruise sea tourism along the Northern Sea Route and the organization here in the future of an "ecological isthmus" between Chukotka and Alaska [11, Korostelev E.M., Biletsky A.V., pp. 15—16].

In addition to attractions, the ecotourism potential of the park includes the culture of the indigenous peoples living here - the Chukchi and the Eskimo. The rich natural and ethnic potential of this region creates prerequisites for the development of recreational use of nature, ecological and ethnic tourism. It is necessary to implement a number of common activities to all the Arctic SPAs: to improve the level of servicing of the existing infrastructure for accommodation and food for tourists; to train qualified personnel for the organization of environmental and ethnic tourism in the Arctic; to involve indigenous peoples of the North to the tourism activities; to ensure the conservation of natural and cultural heritage in the polar areas; to modernize the existing port facilities and arrivals for cruise ships.

### *Conclusion*

Summing up the plans for the complex social and economic development of the Arctic, its features and tourist and recreation activities in the polar regions, it should be noted that most of the tourist attractions in the Arctic are difficult to reach and they are mainly located in specially protected natural areas (SPAs). It is possible to see the primordial world of nature reserves and national parks, to get acquainted with the Arctic nature, the history of the development of the North and the culture of the indigenous peoples of the North only with the help of aircrafts or

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<sup>10</sup> Natsionalnyi park "Onezhskoe Pomorie". [The National Park "Onezhskoe Pomorie"] URL: <http://onpomor.ru/work/nauchnaya-deyatelnost/stepen-izuchennosti.php> (Accessed: 23 January 2018). [In Russian]

<sup>11</sup> Natsionalnyi park «Beringia». [The National Park "Beringia"]. URL: <http://www.beringiapark.ru> (Accessed: 25 December 2017). [In Russian]



cruise ships. The availability of Arctic territories and tourism facilities will increase as the transport and infrastructure of the North develops. This will be possible only if modern equipment and a relevant service of transport communications and ports along the NSR is provided, the infrastructure of settlements is reconstructed, the number of sea berths and airports in the Northern areas of the Russian Federation is increased. Thus, Russia is gradually increasing its defense, social and economic presence in the Arctic and is focusing its efforts on the exploration and development of natural resources, on the organization of new Arctic protected areas (PA) and on ensuring the security of Russia's polar frontier. The success of further development of the country depends on a balanced and harmonious relationship in the development of industrial and tourist-recreational use of natural resources during the “reconstruction” of the Arctic territories of the Russian Federation. Environmental management in Arctic latitudes should be carried out under the close supervision of an independent state service for environmental monitoring of the Arctic environment. This will ensure protection against destruction and contribute to the preservation and restoration of the unique ecosystems of the Arctic and the North of the Russian Federation.

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