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Sustainable Tourism in Sakhalin and Engagement of Indigenous Communities.

A.G. Limanzo, representative of
Sakhalin Indigenous Minorities at
the Sakhalin Regional Duma



Sakhalin is one of the backbone resource regions of Russia, and has important political, military-strategic and economic significance for the country. Based on a number of economically significant indicators, the region takes leading positions not only in the Far Eastern Federal District, but in the country as a whole.



Sakhalin's economy has extensive and stable linkages with the global market: it exports from 50% (fish) to 100% (LNG) of all its manufactured products, thus accounting for a steady share of about 3% of the total Russian exports.

The key specialties of Sakhalin are: fishing, oil and gas production, and coal mining.

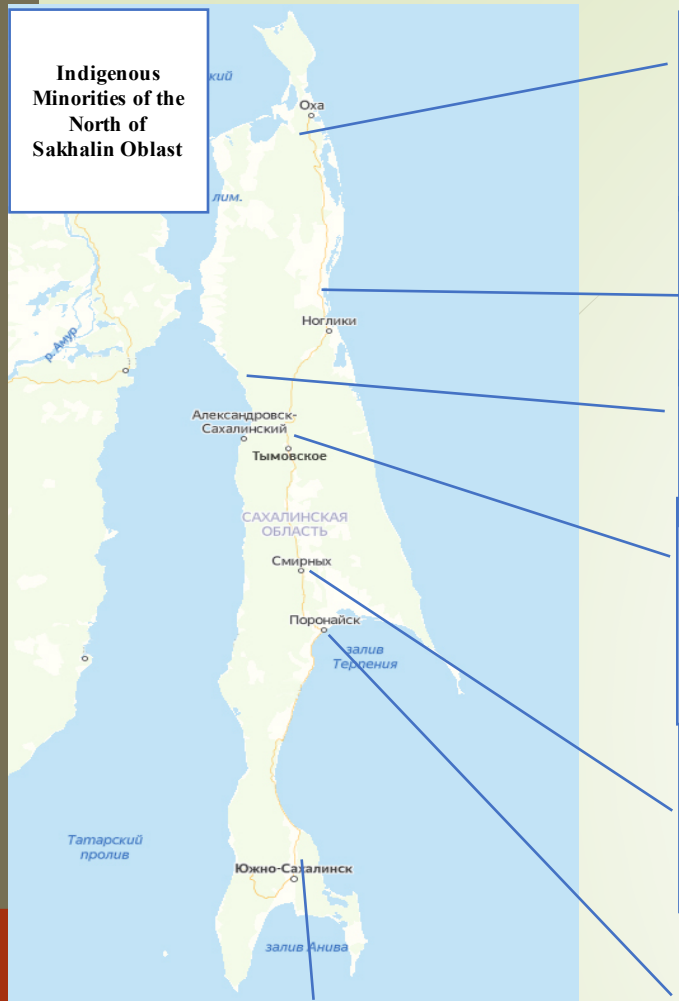


Sakhalin can offer opportunities for diversified tourism (environmental, ethnological, cultural and educational, sports (skiing, cycling), event, business, balneological, gastronomic, hunting, fishing and other), and the promotion of tourism will increase the revenue of local budgets.



The Government of Sakhalin has designated tourism as one of the key areas of regional economic development in the coming years. One of the objectives is to raise tourist flow to 600 thousand people a year by 2035. To this end, a number of infrastructure and investment projects for a total annual investment of more than 2.5 billion rubles are being implemented.

**Indigenous
Minorities of the
North of
Sakhalin Oblast**



Municipality of Okha

Nivkhs -1450,
Oroki (Uilta) - 16,
Evenks - 87.

Municipality of Nogliki

Nivkhs - 877,
Oroki (Uilta) - 137,
Evenks - 113.

**Municipality of Aleksandrovsk-
Sakhalinskiy**

Nivkhs - 68,
Evenks - 47.

Municipality of Tymovskoye

Nivkhs - 279,
Oroki (Uilta) - 12,
Evenks - 12,
Nanai - 9.

Municipality of Smirnykh

Nivkhs - 11,
Oroki (Uilta) - 17,
Evenks - 7,
Nanai - 34.

Municipality of Poronaysk

Nivkhs - 280,
Oroki (Uilta) - 255,
Evenks - 45,
Nanai - 114.

Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk City

Municipality

Nivkhs - 295,
Oroki (Uilta) - 37,
Evenks - 32,
Nanai - 51,
Other ethnic groups - 28.

Ethnic tourism is becoming one of the promising tourist attractions. More than 4 thousand representatives of indigenous peoples of the North live in the Sakhalin region.

The indigenous ethnic groups include the Nivkhs, the Nanai, the Oroks (Uilta), and the Evenks.

The traditional economic activities of indigenous peoples include fishing, reindeer breeding, hunting, gathering, dog breeding, and arts and crafts.





Traditional festivals are important in the life of Sakhalin Indigenous Minorities. Fishing and hunting festivals are held on the eve of the fishing season (June) and the hunting season, and also in the fall, when the fishing and hunting seasons are over. During the festivals, the elders and fishermen make a ritual sacrifice to the spirit, the master of the sea. According to the belief, the sea is inhabited by its master (tol yz – as the Nivkhs call it) and people of the sea (or water), who send the communities their main food - fish and sea animals. These rituals were performed for the purpose of titillating the sea spirits.



These include the traditional rites of Appealing to the Spirits, which are held on the shores of Nyisky Bay (Nogliksky District), Terpeniya Bay (Poronaysk District) and Piltun Bay (Nogliksky District), the Kurey Reindeer Herders' Festival, the Pitul Festival on the Tym River (Tymovsky District) and the Nanai Traditional Rites Festival (Poronaysk City). Elders will put sarana roots, dried stalks of whitetail, millet, berries and tobacco into the ritual plates with carvings of stylized seals and sea birds. Treating the spirits, they ask them to let us catch a lot of fish, to make us live without illnesses, so that children won't get sick.



When traveling to northern Sakhalin, be sure to visit local ethnographic museums that preserve the culture of indigenous peoples, and ethnocultural centers.

The festival program includes performances by ethnic art groups, an exhibition of arts and crafts of indigenous peoples of the North with a rich collection of works of Sakhalin artists, sporting events, and ethnic cuisine competitions.



Sports competitions are not about strength, but about the centuries old and honed hunting skills, and the craft of handling deer and dogs. The most popular sports are reindeer racing and running with a dog, archery and mauta throwing (the same as lasso). There are also competitions that are open to anyone willing to take part: archery, throwing a 'harpoon' at a target from a swinging board, air gun shooting, national wrestling, jumping over the sledge, and tug-of-war.



The ethnographic collections of the main repository of antiquities on the island, the Sakhalin Regional Museum of Local Lore, attract many tourists coming to Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk.

The collections feature authentic items from the late 19th and early 20th centuries that testify to the existence of a distinctive traditional culture among the indigenous people of Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands.



On the International Day of the Indigenous Peoples of the World, the Sakhalin Regional Museum of Local Lore in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk hosts a regional festival of folk arts and crafts of Sakhalin's indigenous minorities, *Living Traditions*. The festival includes a fashion show of Sakhalin indigenous people's clothing, an arts and crafts fair, master classes, games, and a concert.



Sakhalin is currently taking a systemic effort to provide for the development of ethnic tourism and engagement of the indigenous communities with traditional crafts.





The popularity of ethnic tourism has been growing in recent years among visitors and residents of Sakhalin. To promote tourism in Sakhalin, the Ministry of Tourism of Sakhalin Oblast is offering an educational program for tour guides from the indigenous communities. This is an important effort to spread the knowledge of history, culture and traditions of local peoples.



Combining Sakhalin's unique nature and culture of the indigenous peoples with the solid skills of tourism professionals has a significant effect on the development of ethnographic tourism and related services. The efficiency will be higher if these activities are carried out in close cooperation between the indigenous peoples and tourism organizations.



Thank you!