

# Establishing Novosibirsk Islands Federal Nature Sanctuary

Novosibirsk Islands Federal Nature Sanctuary with a total area of 6,594,496.3 hectares will be created in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) on the Novosibirsk Islands Archipelago and adjoining waters. The purpose of the sanctuary is to preserve unique island ecosystems of the Russian Arctic, which have great environmental and scientific importance, the habitats and breeding grounds of many species of animals, including those requiring special protection (polar bears, Laptev subspecies of walrus, rose gulls and others), and historical and cultural sites related to the period of discovery and exploration of the islands. The adopted decision will create the legal foundation supporting the special protection regime for natural complexes and sites on lands included in the boundaries of the sanctuary.

## **Reference**

Submitted by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment in keeping with Federal Law No 33-FZ of 14 March 1995, On Specially Protected Nature Areas.

The creation of the Novosibirsk Islands Federal Nature Sanctuary was approved as per the Plan for Observing the Year of the Environment in Russia in 2017 (approved by Government Directive No. 1082-r of 2 June 2016) and the Plan to Implement the Strategy for the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation and the Provision of National Security up to 2020.

The signed directive establishes Novosibirsk Islands Federal Nature Sanctuary (hereinafter referred to as the sanctuary), with a total area of 6,594,496.3, in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) on the Novosibirsk Islands Archipelago and adjoining waters (a section of inland sea and the territorial sea of the Russian Federation with a width of 12 nautical miles adjoining the territory of the Novosibirsk Islands Archipelago). The sanctuary will be under the jurisdiction of the Natural Resources Ministry.

The purpose of the sanctuary is to preserve unique island ecosystems of the Russian Arctic, which have great environmental and scientific importance, habitats and breeding grounds of many species of animals, including those requiring special protection (polar bears, Laptev subspecies of walrus, rose gulls and others), and historical and cultural sites related to the period of discovery and exploration of the islands.

The islands of the archipelago are home to the world's largest sedimentary deposit of mammoth bone and other remains of "mammoth fauna" of the Pleistocene era. On Zhokhov Island, which is part of the Novosibirsk Islands Archipelago, scientists discovered a campsite of people of the Stone Age (about seven thousand years ago). This is the northernmost known campsite of ancient humans. Also, natural geological monuments with considerable aesthetic value were discovered on the islands.

The island ecosystems, with their characteristic biological diversity and geomorphological structure combined with historical and paleontological landmarks, are a draw for tourists who can visit the sanctuary on Arctic cruises.

The results of the comprehensive environmental survey of the territory, which justified giving this territory the legal status of a specially protected natural area of federal importance, were publicly discussed and approved in a state environmental review.

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