

Project Update: April 2004

During summer 2004 we conduct the survey in Meinypilgyno village area (the participant's cost was also kindly covered by Keidanren Nature Conservation Fund, Japan). We found 45 nests and pairs of Spoon-billed Sandpiper and banded 15 adults and 45 chicks during the survey. This banding was successful since two juveniles we banded as downy chicks were observed in South Korea and Japan. The adult's survival rate and breeding success were not very high but also were not extremely low and the critical situation with the population cannot be pointed out. Another interesting result is that unfavourable weather conditions of a distinct year (huge spring water flooding in 2004) may have sufficient negative impact both on breeding success and may cause a limitation of some birds for breeding. This demonstrates that understanding of causes of species decline needs continuation of regular monitoring to be done throughout the species breeding range.

Human impact also might be an important negative factor in close vicinity of Meinypilgyno village. Lectures for local people (adults and children) were done in this relation (see photo). The project leader together with specialists of Chukchi Environmental Agency made a petition to the Chukchi National Area governor R. Abramovich to stop construction of the fish-works factory near Meinypilgyno which can disturb nesting Spoon-billed Sandpipers or destroy their habitats. Fortunately, the factory was designed as a barge not a building and was safe for birds.

Our plans for summer 2005 with the rest of funds include reactivation of the monitoring of at the northern Koluichinskaya Gulf where another biggest Spoon-billed Sandpiper population is located. This population have been studied in 1972-73, 1986-88 and 2002, and accurate bird counts and demographic studies were done. Many birds were banded in 2002 and we expect both adults and chicks to return. That is why re-visiting will get us a possibility to put a new point on this exciting list of surveys and will provide us with the needed information about demographic structure of the population and about tendency of changes in SBS numbers during last three years.

In 2005 we improved our collaboration with local conservation organisations. This summer two research assistants of the Wrangel Island State Reserve will join the field survey. We also are very glad to collaborate with the Nature - Ethnic Park Beringia" whose territory also includes our study area. The Beringia" Park staffs consist from native people who investigate the nature in the vicinity of their home villages and report about their observations. Both Park personnel and we suppose very promising the experience exchanging in the field and, especially, enforcing the native people participation in conservation-related researches.