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**Title:** *Island Ecosystems of the Pechora Sea (Vaigach and Kolguev Islands), as the Centers of Arctic Animals Biodiversity*

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Vaigach and Kolguev Islands are the centers of waterfowl habitat in the Arctic. They are included in the list of important bird areas of international importance (IBAs). Studies of wildlife on the island Kolguev were conducted in the summer seasons of 2006-2009 and then 2011-2012, and on Vaigach Island in 2000 and in 2010. Kolguev Island is the most important nesting site of geese throughout Western Palearctic. Breeding population of White-fronted Goose, Bean Goose and Barnacle Goose here reaches several tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands couples. Rare species of birds (Bewick's Swan, Common Eider, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Oystercatcher) are nesting here. Local population of Willow Ptarmigan, which migrates to the continent in winter are found here. Its population on the island reaches the highest values in the district. Unique nesting densities of birds on the Kolguev, among other factors (climate, biogeographic) are associated with the absence any rodents in tundra ecosystems.

The island Vaigach and adjoining small islands are the main breeding habitats of Tundra Bean Goose, Common Eider, Bewick's Swan. The area has a relatively high density of nesting Peregrine Falcons, regular visits of other rare birds of prey (White-tailed Eagle, Golden Eagle, Merlin) during molting geese. The Atlantic Walrus, Ringed Seal, Bearded Seal and Polar Bear are met constantly. Wetlands of the islands are important for waterfowl, not only during the breeding season, but also during their molt and seasonal migrations. They play an important role as a forage habitats and areas of concentration for birds during migration. Adjacent waters play a key role in feeding, migration and reproduction of marine mammals.

Here are the main breeding grounds of Atlantic Walrus in the Pechora Sea, migratory routes of White Whales and several species of seals.

Island ecosystems are most vulnerable to human impacts, especially impacts related to maritime transport and the production and transportation of hydrocarbons. With the development of hydrocarbon production on the shelf, the risk of negative effects on these habitats increases, especially on the islands of the Pechora Sea.

So there exists real necessity to create federal protected areas on the Kolguev Island and to raise the status of protected areas on the Vaigach Island, as important areas for preserving the genetic resources of the biota in the Arctic. The protection



of these areas has not only national, but also international value. These activities will help to save biodiversity of the Arctic.