

## Sakhalin & Kurile Islands

### Overview:

Sakhalin Oblast is a region within the Federation of Russia that includes Sakhalin Island and the Kurile Islands. Sakhalin Oblast's main economic activity is the development of oil and gas projects throughout the territory, many of which are supported internationally by companies such as Mobil/Exxon and Shell. The Kurile Islands have been a topic of dispute between Russia and Japan since the mid-nineteenth century, and both governments continue to dispute rightful ownership over the Kurile Islands. Currently, the Russian Federation governs Sakhalin Oblast, including the Kuriles (a region equivalent to a province) under the national constitution.

### Territory:

The largest island of Sakhalin Oblast is Sakhalin Island. It occupies a territory of 78,000 km<sup>2</sup>. It stretches north to south for 948 km. The highest elevation in Sakhalin is Mt. Lopatine at 1,609 m. The Kurile Islands, of which there are 56, have a total land area of 15,592 km<sup>2</sup>. The Kurile archipelago stretches for 1,247 km northwest to the Kamchatka Peninsula, and the largest of these islands are Iturup, Kunashir, and Paramushir.

### Location:

Sakhalin Oblast, of which the Kurile Islands are a part, is located to the east of Russia and north of Japan. Sakhalin Island is separated from the mainland of the east by the Tartar Strait and the Sea of Okhotsk to the north. The Kurile Islands stretch northeast from Hokkaido, Japan to Kamchatka, separating the Sea of Okhotsk from the Pacific Ocean.

### Latitude and Longitude:

Between 45 50' and 54 24' N and between 143 and 151 30 E.

### Time Zone:

GMT +9

### Total Land Area:

93592

### EEZ:

### Climate:

The climate in Sakhalin is influenced by the sea. Spring arrives in April. May, June, and July are rainy and foggy. Average temperatures range from 17C to 19C in the summer and in the winter temperatures are approximately -15C. In the Kurile Region, the majority of sunny days happen in August, but this season is also characterized by typhoons and hurricane winds. Precipitation in the Kuriles varies between 600 mm in the north to 1000 mm in the south. Owing to the influence of the raw, foggy Sea of Okhotsk, the climate is very cold. At Dui the annual range is from 27 Å°C in July to -39 Å°C in January, while at Rykovsk in the interior the minimum is -45 Å°C. The rainfall averages 570 mm. Thick clouds for the most part shut out the sun; the cold current from the Sea of Okhotsk, aided by north-east winds, brings immense ice-floes to the east coast in summer.

### Natural Resources:

Flora and fauna includes subtropical shellfish, sea urchins, many fingered starfish, subtropical plants such as yew, bamboo, wild grapes and herbs. The Kuril Islands form a volcanic island arc as a result of plate tectonics and are home to over 100 volcanoes, about 35 of which are active. The Kuril Trench is an oceanic trench that runs about 200 km east of the Kuril Islands. The islands themselves are summits of stratovolcanoes that rise from the seabed. There are frequent earthquakes.

### ECONOMY:

<b>Total GDP:</b>
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<b>Per Capita GDP:</b>
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<b>% of GDP per Sector:</b>			
	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Tertiary</b>

<b>% of Population Employed by Sector</b>			
	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Tertiary</b>

### External Aid/Remittances:

Sakhalin Oblast, as a constituent unit of the Russia, has not received the financial subsidies to which it is entitled because of the financial difficulties Russia experienced during their turbulent economic transition (after the dissolution of the USSR).

### Growth:

<b>Labour Force:</b>
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<b>Unemployment</b>	
<b>Year:</b>	<b>Unemployment Rate (% of pop.)</b>
2002	2%

### Industry:

coal mining, extensive oil/petroleum exploration and mining, fishing, farming of grains and vegetables.

**Niche Industry:**

winter tours; hiking among solemn cliffs with waterfalls; numerous bird colonies, remnants of Japanese paths crossing the whole of Sakhalin Island.

**Tourism:**

<b>Imports and Exports:</b>	
<b>Tot. Value of Imports</b>	0.00 ( )
<b>From Eu:</b>	
<b>Import Partners (EU:)</b>	
<b>Partners Outside EU:</b>	
<b>Import Partners:</b>	
<b>Tot. Value of Exports</b>	( )
<b>To Eu:</b>	
<b>Export Partners:</b>	
<b>Partners Outside EU::</b>	
<b>Export Partners:</b>	
<b>Main Imports:</b>	
<b>Main Exports:</b>	

**TRANSPORTATION/ACCESS****External:****Number of Airports:**

There is no direct access to Sakhalin Island or to the Kurile Islands from the United States. Sakhalin does have its own airline, Sakhalin Air Trans (SAT) which operates daily flights between Sakhalin and Moscow, Seoul, and Hokkaido.

**Number of Main Ports:**

Regular ferry service runs from Wakkami, Japan to Korsakov, Sakhalin Island. It is also possible to travel and visit the Kurile Islands by vessel departing from Korsakov. Ferry service is also available among the smaller islands around Sakhalin and between the Kurile Islands.

**Internal:****Air****Road:**

Regular train transportation runs north and south on Sakhalin Island daily. The road structure on Sakhalin Island and in the Kuriles is poor.

**Sea:****Other Forms of Transportation:****Economic Zones:****Energy Policy:**

Sakhalin Energy, which is the new energy source of the Asia Pacific, is a project that comprises the development of two fields: Piltun-Astokhskoye, an oil field with associated gas; and Lunsokoye, a gas field with associated condensate and an oil rim. Together, the oil fields contain recoverable hydrocarbon of over 1 billion barrels of crude oil and more than 500 billion cubic metres of natural gas. This translates to more than one year of crude oil exports from Russia at the current level of approximately 2.5 barrels per day, and the gas reserves represent nearly five years of Russian gas exports to Europe – or enough to supply current global natural gas demand for four years. Sakhalin Energy is a multi-phased project. Phase 1, already complete, focused on oil development in an ice-free period; it was seasonal development. Phase 2, currently underway, is focusing on an integrated oil and gas development allowing for year-round production. This phase of the project will involve approximately \$10 billion investment by the United States, and it will also provide a solid background for stable economic growth with further development in the Sakhalin region.

Year	Total Energy Production (Mwh)	Type			Total Energy Consumption (Mwh)	Sector				
		Thermic (Mwh)	Geothermic (Mwh)	Other (Mwh)		Domestic (Mwh)	Commercial (Mwh)	Public Service (Mwh)	Industry (Mwh)	Public Lighting (Mwh)

**Official Currency:**

Ruble

**Banking and Insurance:**

Number of Banks and Credit Unions:

Number of Agricultural Credit Unions:

Number of Insurance Companies:



Major national banks and local banks are represented in Sakhalin Oblast and the Kurile Islands. They include Bank of Moscow, Bank Iturup, Rosbank, the Far Eastern Bank, Sakhalin-West Bank.

**Financial Services:**

**Communications/E-Commerce:**

The largest communication enterprises in the Sakhalin region are JSC "Sakhalinsvyaz" and the State Institution, "Administration of the Federal Post Communication of the Sakhalin Region." The Sakhalin region has a telecommunications network consisting of radial lines outgoing to 17 areas from Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk. In 1997, the first 120 high-speed satellite channels, in communication with Moscow, were put into operation. There are also 240 digital channels in communication with Moscow, and 600 more digital channels for intraband communication.

**Public Ownership:**

**Land Use:**

Nature reserves on Sakhalin, which are protected by the State, comprise 11.8% of the region's area. Such reserves include 1 special nature reserve of federal value, 11 game reserves to protect and reproduce species, 2 complex special nature reserves, 47 national monuments, and 1 National Park ("Moneron Island" which is the first marine national park in Russia).

**Agriculture/Forestry:**

wheat, oats, barley, and vegetables are grown in an average growing season that is less than 100 days.

**Marine Activity:**

**Fishing:**

Territorial sea: 12 nautical miles; exclusive economic zone: 200 nautical miles.

**Marine Life:**

**Critical Issues:**

Dispute between Russia and Japan over Kuriles: Russia and Japan have been in dispute over the Kurile Islands since the mid-nineteenth century when the first treaty was signed indicating national boundaries. Since that time, several treaties have been signed, but the dispute over ownership continues. The islands of Etorofu, Kunashiri, Shikotan, and Habomai have always been Japanese territory, unlike Sakhalin Oblast and the other Kurile Islands, but even these islands have been included in the Russian-Japan dispute at times. Currently, Russia and Japan are still negotiating the attribution of the four northern territories, and both sides want to come to a peaceful resolution, but the resolution is yet to be determined. Oil projects in Sakhalin causing environmental concern: A \$10 billion oil and gas project led by Royal Dutch/Shell Group on Sakhalin Island is threatening the survival of local gray whales. Sakhalin Energy Company recommends altering the route of the pipeline used by oil and gas fields in the area. There have also been several oil spills from tankers causing environmental dangers for gray whales and other marine life. Royal Dutch/Shell Group is complying with the recommendations to preserve the gray whale population; however, some other oil and gas projects in Sakhalin are not as co-operative; they continue to develop their oil and gas projects, and are not complying with environmental recommendations.

**JURISDICTIONAL RESOURCES**

**Capital:**

**Political System:**

A combination of a presidential and parliamentary republic. Sakhalin Oblast is a region equivalent to a province in Canada. The Kurile Islands, which are part of Sakhalin Oblast, are equivalent to a sub-jurisdiction of a province; for example, the Kuriles are to Sakhalin what Cape Breton is to Nova Scotia.

**Political Parties:**

**Important Legislation:**

**Principal Taxes:**

Sakhalin Oblast receives 50% of its tax revenues, and the federal government receives the other 50%. Personal income tax revenues are given entirely to Sakhalin Oblast.

**Associated Power:**

Russia

**Citizenship:**

Residents of Sakhalin Oblast are Russian citizens.

**Paradiplomacy:**

**HUMAN RESOURCES**

673 100 (2000)

Island	Area (km sq.)	Population	% of Total Population
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Population:	
Year	Resident Population

Age of Population:	0-14	15-24	25-49	50-64	65 and up
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**Migration:**

Crude Birth Rate:
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**Life Expectancy:**

66.1 years

**Crude Death Rate:****Ethnicity:**

83% ethnic Russians; Koreans 30,000 (5.5%); native inhabitants consist of 2,000 Nivkhs, 1,300 Ainus, 750 Orochons, 200 Evenks and some Yakuts. The Nivkhs in the north support themselves by fishing and hunting. The capital, Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, a city of about 200,000, has a large Korean minority many who were forcibly brought by the Japanese during World War II to work in the coal mines. Most of the population lives in the southern half of the island, centered mainly around Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk and two ports, Kholmsk and Korsakov (population 50,000 each). The 400,000 Japanese inhabitants of Sakhalin were deported following the conquest of the southern portion of the island by the Soviet Union in 1945 at the end of World War II. Roughly 30,000 people (ethnic Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Tatars, Koreans, Nivkhs, Oroch, and Ainu) inhabit the Kuril Islands. About half of the population lives below the poverty line, according to the regional administration.

**Class Division:****Languages:**

Russian (primarily on Sakhalin); Russian and Japanese (Kuriles).

**Religion:****Literacy:**

99.5%

**Education System:**

Sakhalin has a state university, Sakhalin State University with a population of over 6000 students. The University offers specialist degrees, baccalaureate degrees, and graduate/post-graduate studies in areas such as Natural Science, Economics and Oriental Studies, Education, Law, History, Sociology, and Public Administration. Sakhalin State University has international agreements with the University of Hokkaido and the University of Alaska. International cooperation is aimed at developing good working relationships with Far East countries, so as to further develop local economies and other future projects.

<b>Total Pre-schools:( )</b>	
<b>Total Primary Schools</b>	
<b>First Level:</b>	
<b>Second Level:</b>	
<b>Third Level:</b>	
<b>Total Secondary Schools:</b>	
<b>Total Professional Schools</b>	
<b>Universities:</b>	

<b>Number of Schools per Island:</b>										
	<b>Pre-school</b>		<b>Elementary</b>			<b>High-school</b>		<b>Prof.</b>	<b>University</b>	
	<b>Pub</b>	<b>Priv</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Pub</b>	<b>Priv</b>		<b>Pub</b>	<b>Priv</b>

<b>Students Enrolled:</b>					
<b>Year:</b>	<b>Pre-School</b>	<b>Elementary</b>	<b>High-school</b>	<b>Prof.</b>	<b>University</b>

<b>Teachers</b>							
<b>Year</b>	<b>Pre-School</b>	<b>Elementary</b>			<b>High-School</b>	<b>Prof.</b>	<b>University</b>
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>			

**Medical Services:****HISTORY AND CULTURE****History:**

Sakhalin Island and the Kurile Islands were always a source of great attention by navigators, explorers, and sailors. Indeed, the first explorers of Sakhalin were the Cossacks. In the mid-seventeenth century, the Cossack explorers brought these islands – Sakhalin and the Kuriles – to the attention of the Russian government. Since then, many navigators have explored Sakhalin Island and the Kuriles, and many geographical regions on Sakhalin are named after the explorers who discovered them. In the 17th century, Sakhalin Island and the Kuriles came to the attention of some Japanese researchers. In 1855, the first Russian-Japanese treaty was signed agreeing that the border line between Russia and Japan would lie between the islands of Iturup and Urup. The islands of Urup and everything to the north belonged to Russia, and the Islands of Iturup, Kunashir, and Habomai remained territories of Japan. Sakhalin was not included in this division. In 1905, war broke out as a result of the struggle for supremacy

between Russia and Japan in Manchuria and Korea. At this time, a treaty was signed between Russia and Japan that ceded the southern part of Sakhalin to Japan. In 1918, the civil war, which had begun in Russia, spread to Sakhalin. By April 1920, Japan occupied northern Sakhalin, and soon started its economic assimilation, of which Sakhalin oil was its focus. According to an agreement signed in 1925, the USSR government granted to Japan concessions to oil and oil deposits for a period of 45 years. Until 1944, Japan exported to themselves two thousand tons of oil yearly. By 1946, Sakhalin and the Kuriles became Russian territory. Until this time, Japan had not recognized the lawfulness of the agreement governing the ownership of the southern Kuriles. Currently, Russia and Japan are still in negotiations over the Kuriles, and they are still aiming to come to a resolution. To date, that resolution has not been determined.

#### Referenda:

#### Recent Significant Events:

Sakhalin Railroad: There is a project being considered to construct two bridges: (1) between Sakhalin and the Russian mainland; and (2) between Sakhalin and Hokkaido. If the project is realized, one could travel straight through by train from Tokyo, Japan to London, England because the Tunnel of Tsugary Strait (separates Hokkaido from Honshyu) and the Tunnel of Dover Strait (separates England from the continent) are both fully operational now.

#### Music, Dance, Handicraft and Patrimony:

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