



WSBS Visitor Handbook

Welcome

Welcome to the White Sea Biological Station. WSBS was established in 1938 as a branch of the Department of Biology at the Lomonosov Moscow State University for research and training in marine biology and terrestrial ecosystems.

WSBS offers a wide array of natural environments as well as laboratories equipped with modern facilities, computers, and the logistical support necessary for a wide variety of research and teaching programs.

WSBS is also a community. Many of you will be spending weeks or even months living and working here with us. We look forward to getting to know you and providing the best support we can. The station staff is here to help with your work and make your life at the station as profitable and enjoyable as possible. Please make yourself at home and let us know how we can help.

The purpose of this handbook is to inform you about the resources, procedures and rules everyone using the Station needs to be aware of. If you still have questions please ask. Our web site also contains up-to-date information on resources, programs, applications, and fees.

Welcome!
The WSBS Staff

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Fundamental Code of Behaviour

Everyone visiting or living at WSBS is expected to abide by an honorable and considerate code of behaviour. This means showing respect for others, even if they hold widely divergent opinions from yours. We try to provide an inviting, friendly and nondiscriminatory forum for the free and rich exchange of ideas. Receptivity to your fellow WSBS residents and consideration of them in every way possible helps assure a peaceful, productive and non-threatening environment.

Collecting/Natural Reserves

Residents should remember that the Station has a special responsibility to conserve the flora and fauna of the area. Indiscriminate collecting has led to the depletion of the habitats surrounding many field stations. Therefore, please help to preserve the White Sea biota by *refraining from picking or collecting any plant or animal material* unless they are part of an approved research program. Unapproved collection of geological, archeological or historical material or any items from station property is also prohibited.

The WSBS surrounding area and the Kindo peninsula are part of the nature reserve "Arctic Circle". It is prohibited to collect rare wild plants, and to collect wild berries and mushrooms in industrial quantities. It is prohibited to hunt, make fires, and to camp within the territory of the WSBS settlement and the Kindo peninsula. It is also prohibited to collect macroinvertebrates and dig Lugworms in the intertidal zone within the territory of the WSBS settlement.

Part of the waters of the Great Salma strait belongs to the Kandalaksha State Nature Reserve. It is prohibited to approach the Velikiy island (the big island opposite to the WSBS settlement) closer than 200 meters and to land on it.

Problems / Grievance

Problems, complaints or non-safety related emergencies having to do with the station's policies, procedures, actions or facilities should be brought to the attention of the Associate Director or Director. They are here to make sure the station is working for you. This includes all research and teaching issues. Interpersonal conflicts not related to use of the station are best solved among the parties involved. However, all WSBS staff members make themselves available to assist in resolving such conflicts. We especially encourage students to approach any of us if they are uncomfortable *in any way* with their treatment by, or relationship with, a teacher or mentor. We are 100% committed to maintaining a healthy and nurturing environment for our students and all our residents. It is easy in a small and tightly knit community such as WSBS for rumors to get started and spread quickly. Some are unfounded, and others may indeed be correct. If you hear anything that gives you pause, please attempt to verify the accuracy of the rumor before passing it around. In this manner communication among all of us is enhanced and accuracy preserved.

Arrival and Departure

Visits of students and researchers to WSBS are conducted according to the schedule, which is drawn up annually in advance. All visitors must notify the WSBS administration of their departure date, date and time of arrival to Poyakonda, and the train number. Every visitor *must* have a passport and medical insurance.

After your arrival at WSBS, please see the reception as soon as possible so that you may be checked in. You will be provided with your room key, and directions, as well as additional information about

WSBS. It is extremely important that the WSBS administration knows *exactly* when you are arriving and leaving, as far in advance as possible. This is to ensure the boat transfer from and to Poyakonda, and to bill you properly for your room and board.

SCUBA Diving

Only qualified SCUBA divers with a PADI diving certificate level OWD or higher are allowed to dive from our boats and use our tanks. There are no exceptions to this rule. To dive, please contact Elena Vortsepneva, Chief of the diving station, e-mail address: vortcepneva@gmail.com at the latest, *two months* in advance of the beginning of the diving season, which usually starts in the beginning of June.

Tanks, weights and belts are available at WSBS. Potential divers must bring the minimum personal equipment (scuba diving wet/dry suit, fins, mask) and diving certification. Divers will have to sign a waiver to be able to dive using WSBS diving facilities. Remember, that the White Sea is a cold sea. Summer surface water temperature is usually about 11-13°C, occasionally reaching 18°C, while in winter it is 0.3-0.8°C. Below 10-20 m of depth, the water temperature is 2-5°C all year round.

Quiet Hours

Quiet hours are 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. Please remember that station residents keep widely varying hours and that noise travels easily from cabin to cabin. All residents must respect requests from other residents for reduced noise irrespective of the hour.

Locked Areas

There are very few locked areas on the Station. Entering locked areas without authorization constitutes a violation of the Honor Code, and Russian Federation State Law.

Leaving the WSBS Settlement

To ensure safety of the field practice, it is prohibited to leave the WSBS settlement alone without prior notification of your supervisor. Applies both to land and sea.

All motorboat trips are subject to prior mandatory registration according to the WSBS procedure. You have to log in the general register, and in the register of the vessel movement, and to obtain permission of the responsible for WSBS fleet, and of the WSBS administration. According to the safety rules, all requests should be made one day in advance.

Rowboats are available for research and pleasure purposes. To take a boat, you need to obtain permission of the responsible for WSBS fleet, and notify your supervisor.

Do not paddle far away from the WSBS settlement coasts, the currents are very strong. It is prohibited to approach the Velikiy island (the big island opposite to the WSBS settlement) closer than 200 meters and to land on it. Always wear the life jacket.

Guests, Children, Pets

Guests, children, and pets are generally not permitted at the station. In rare cases, it has to be approved by the WSBS Council and Director in advance.

Parents bear full responsibility for health and lives of their children at the WSBS, as well as for their conduct and actions.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted in any station building. Be aware of fire danger. Dispose of butts properly.

Drugs

If any person is found with marijuana or other illegal drugs in his/her possession upon arrival in WSBS, they are requested to leave the WSBS campus immediately and may be subject to Russian criminal laws. In your best interest and that of WSBS, we would appreciate your full co-operation in avoiding such an issue. Prescription Drugs: you must be able to present a doctor's prescription for any medication.

Firearms

No firearms or other potentially dangerous devices or material are permitted on the station. Any device or material that is controlled, restricted, or requiring of a special permit must be declared and approved before being brought onto station property.

Garbage

All trash must be placed in the dumpsters. Please keep WSBS area neat.

Rules of the Station

White Sea Biological Station is a facility of the Lomonosov Moscow State University. And as such is subject to all laws, rules, regulations, and policies applicable to the Lomonosov Moscow State University, including the University Honor Code, Alcohol and Drug, Firearm, Sexual Assault, Residence Halls and Housing policies, and all other policies and rules defined by the Policy Department of the Lomonosov Moscow State University. Violators of University, Russian Federation, or station rules or policies may be dismissed from the station immediately. In order to protect the interests of the community, station staff reserves the right to dismiss any person behaving in an inappropriate manner or whose actions it is judged pose a danger to him/herself or others. Station users are responsible for knowing and employing appropriate laboratory and field environment research procedures and regulations.

Informaton

Administrative Offices

WSBS maintains two administrative offices – one on site (the White Sea), and one at Lomonosov Moscow State University in Moscow (Russia). Both offices are open 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday 12 months a year.

Visa and Customs

International students and researchers are required to have entry visas for travel to the Russian Federation. Russian entry visas must be obtained from a Russian Embassy or Consulate in student's country of residence. All supportive material will be sent upon acceptance to the course.

If you are bringing equipment with you (i.e., computers, lab gear, etc.) it will facilitate your clearance through customs if you have these listed on your institution's letterhead indicating that these will be returning with you upon departure.

Getting to WSBS

Take a train from Moscow/St.Petersburg to Poyakonda. If you take a train to Kandalaksha or Knyazhaya, you will have to take a local southbound train to return to Poyakonda.

WSBS organizes boat transfers from Poyakonda to the WSBS settlement. It is not a regular service. We need a notification from you, prior to your trip, to send a boat to pick you up. The same applies to return transfers.

Accommodation & Board

WSBS provides dormitory accommodation for students/researches in rooms for 2–6 people. Bed linen (sheets, pillowcases, blankets, and small towels) is provided for additional fee. Please bring your own large towel for bathhouse. Our electrical systems are identical to European (220 V). Residents are expected to clean their own rooms and do their own laundry during their stay. Maintenance needs should be reported to the office. Please do not move furniture, appliances, rugs, mattresses, garbage cans, or any other items between cottages or out of common use areas without permission from the staff.

A full-board meal plan is obligatory for all persons living in dormitories. Full-board consists of three meals a day. Vegetarian options are not available, however fruits and vegetables may be ordered through the local dining hall service.

Approximate meal times are :

Breakfast 8-9 am

Lunch 1-2 pm

Tea 4-5 p.m.

Dinner 8-9 pm

Please, do not enter the dining hall until the bell rings. Check actual meal times with the reception upon your arrival.

Check with the office or visit the web site for current accommodation & board rates.

Grocery Delivery

Fruit, vegetables, other groceries, basic toiletry and stationery, batteries etc. can be ordered via local Dining Hall delivery service during the summer season, and during the office beyond the summer season. Trips are usually made twice a week. The closest grocery store is in Poyakonda (17 kms). The closest supermarket and pharmacy are in Kandalaksha (100 km).

Laundry

Laundry is located in the bathhouse building. Residents must provide their own laundry soap.

Water and Plumbing

Please treat water as a valuable resource and conserve as much as possible. Please take short showers - get wet, turn off water, lather up, rinse off! Do not run water freely when shaving or brushing your teeth. Ensure all taps are turned off after use, and report leaking showers or taps to reception immediately.

Plumbing at the Aquarial building is very fragile. It is *not* the regular municipal-style system we are all used. *It is absolutely imperative* that nothing but *human waste and tissue* be flushed down the toilet.

Living Equipment and Supplies Needed

You will need to bring: mug, spoon, bowl, towels, personal toiletries, prescription medication, a spare pair of glasses/contacts (if you wear them), laundry soap, «field clothes» (jeans, shorts, tshirts), sweaters or sweatshirts, jacket, shoes good for hiking, flashlight (if not in June and July), sunscreen, rain gear, water bottle.

Optional but useful: rubber “wading” boots, bathing suit, sewing kit, personal computer.

See also [«General checklist: things you will need at WSBS»](#)

Climate

Winter temperatures can drop below -25° C. The winters are long and dark, for two weeks in December the sun does not rise. Spring and autumn are long. Summer is short: two-three months. The warmest month is July with average daytime temperatures being above 19° C, some hot days can see temperatures near 26-30B° C. In June, for two weeks the sun never sets. Nights are cool. The station has frequent summer showers and temperature fluctuations. Warm, informal, layered clothing, as well as adequate outdoor footwear and rain gear are essential.

Time zone

WSBS is in the GMT+3 zone, i.e. three hours ahead of GMT.

Communications: Mail, Telephones, Fax, and E-Mail

Incoming Calls: the WSBS campus number is +7 (815) 33-64-516, which is manned between 9 am and 5:00 pm Monday through Friday. If the person who is being called cannot be found, messages

will be taken. There are no phones in cabins or dorms.

Email and Web-based Communication: Email messages can be sent to the Main Office at info@wsbs-msu.ru. The computer lab is equipped with Internet access for all your web and email needs. Wireless connectivity (wi-fi) is also available in some areas of the WSBS settlement.

Web Page: Our web page is a complete and up-to-date place to find information about WSBS and provides contact information for Station staff. All information and application material (including this Handbook) are available there as well. URL: www.wsbs-msu.ru

Fax: Available for both sending and receiving, +7 (815) 33-64-516. You will be charged for the cost of outgoing faxes.

Pay phone: located at the reception. You can use it for long distance calls. Ask for payment details at the reception.

Cell Phones: There is quite good cell coverage at the station by the national carrier Megafon.

(Snail) Mail: Incoming mail will be put in the mail box in the office building. Please check your box daily as important messages may be left there, including any phone messages. Outgoing mail should be placed in the slot on the bottom left hand side of the mail boxes. There is normally a twice per week delivery to and from WSBS. Stamps, postcards and envelopes may be ordered through the local dining hall service.

Announcements: These will be posted on the bulletin boards near the dining hall and in the office building.

Billing and Payments

All accounts must be paid in full before you leave the station. No checks or credit cards. Cash only. The Russian Rouble is accepted at WSBS and in the region. The station cannot provide check-cashing or exchange services. The closest ATMs and other banking services are available in Kandalaksha. In big cities like Moscow, St.-Petersburg, Murmansk, and Kandalaksha, it is possible to cash traveler's cheques, exchange foreign currency, use VISA or Mastercard, a fee is charged.

Please note that prices may vary slightly depending on the USD/RUB exchange rate. All payments must be done in Russian rubles (RUB).

Recreation

Hiking: There are a number of walking trails around the station you are welcome to use. Do not set out without telling someone where you are going and when you plan to return. Do not hike alone if you are unfamiliar with the area. It is wise to carry a whistle, compass, and map with you. Stay found! Some trails are used only rarely, may be cryptic and/or weakly maintained and blazed. It is very easy to become lost. If we believe someone is lost in the woods we will mount a search and rescue operation very quickly. It is very embarrassing to return into the middle of a search and rescue operation for you. If you do get lost, stay put and listen for sirens and the dining hall bell that will be rung repeatedly as soon as the station thinks it likely you are lost.

Volleyball: Informal, but *very serious* volleyball is often played after dinner.

Swimming: The sea is too cold to swim even in summer. It is possible to swim in the Verkhnee lake, the higher one of the lakes above the station settlement. No swimming in the Vodoprovodnoye lake. Beware of mosquitoes. No lifeguard is on duty and users swim at their own risk. Do not swim after dark.

Safety / Emergencies

In case of serious emergency, such as personal injury, inform a member of the staff, the station doctor, or your program supervisor. For lost persons or fire emergencies, **ring the bell** near the Dining Hall repeatedly.

Although it is sometimes easy to forget, WSBS is a remote location. Caution and conservative judgment can save your life. The station borders thousands of acres of roadless wilderness. Employ a “backwoods” mentality when out of sight of station buildings.

Everyone should make themselves familiar with the location of fire hoses and extinguishers. Smoking is not allowed in any building.

Medical Insurance, Doctor, Hospitals and First-aid Kits

Medical Insurance: Please note that non-staff of WSBS is not included in any of WSBS's insurance coverage. All students and guest researchers are required to have personal medical insurance **including medical evacuation coverage**. You are required to sign a "Health Insurance Waiver", stating that you have adequate insurance to cover your visit to WSBS.

Doctor: During the summer season, there is a doctor on the WSBS campus. He provides first aid and accompanies patients to the hospital. WSBS has only general first-aid medications. If you need prescription drugs or medications for a specific chronic disease, please bring them with you. If you can, bring a spare set. Also bring a spare pair of glasses, and a full supply of contacts, if you wear them.

Hospitals: The nearest hospital is in Knyazhaya (50+ km, 3+ hours). There is a larger regional hospital in Kandalaksha (100+ km, 5+ hours).

First aid kits are available at the doctor's and at the infirmary. In case of accident, do not move victim; wait for qualified person to assist.

Research

Everyone conducting research (including students conducting research projects) must submit a *Research Plan* before work begins. The purpose of this proposal is to prevent conflicts among current projects, record all manipulative activity to minimize impacts on future research, and minimize the chance that the proposed research will be impacted by previous work. In other words, it is for your own good, and the good of the station. Details of field procedures must be included as well as maps of research activity. You must also specify the timetable for your research. Unless otherwise notified, your work will be considered complete at the end of the timetable, and your plots, material, labels, equipment will be deemed abandoned.

All researchers are required to *clean up completely* all research plots, material and equipment at the termination of their project or phase of project. Research litter and abandoned material is a major nuisance for the station staff, and all station users. All stored research material and space must be clearly labeled with *your name* and *date*. This includes all material in refrigerators. Unlabeled material of any kind will become the property of the station and redistributed to anyone who asks, or discarded. This includes lumber, other field supplies, equipment, soil, etc.

Several laboratory buildings house auditoriums, research labs, common use facilities, a conference hall, collections, computer labs, offices, controlled environment rooms, etc. Common use equipment includes ovens, aquariums, refrigerators, microscopes and balances. The station also maintains computer databases including climate data, high/low tide data, WSBS publications list, species lists and station collection records.

Laboratory and Equipment Use

Almost all the equipment you see at the station is available to you. But please consult with a Director or your supervisor before using station property. If equipment or space is posted with a "use sheet," *you must fill it in*. If the sheet is not filled in, your material may be discarded or the equipment used by someone else.

If you are conducting research at the station you are entitled to lab space that fits your needs. Please discuss your needs with your supervisor before moving into any space or counting on the use of any equipment or facility.

You are responsible for knowing and following proper and safe laboratory procedures. Cleaning, safety and security in your research space are your responsibility.

All containers in all lab spaces must be labeled with contents and owners name. Remember to store acids and bases separately. Do not mix food and chemical storage in labs (separate refrigerators, cabinets, benches). No food is permitted in rooms where animals or animal products are used or stored.

Chemicals and Lab Supply: WSBS has available very limited quantities of chemicals and lab supplies. Communicate your requirements at least two months in advance of arrival.

Chemical Waste: Visitors are personally responsible for the disposal of their toxic chemicals. Visitors must assure that their waste is safely contained, packaged and labeled.

Equipment Borrowing: A variety of basic lab and field equipment (measuring tapes, hanging scales, thermometers, tools, etc.) is available for borrowing in the office. If you have critical needs, please check with us before coming to the Station. WSBS solicits requests for new equipment and does its best to acquire items that will be of general and long-term value, when funds are available. Please forward requests to the Director.

Computer Lab and Network

The computer lab is open to all station residents. If you have any questions about the machines or the software please ask before you "explore" too far. The computer lab and entire network are as secure as we can make them while still making them flexible and easy to use.

A few short rules and recommendations apply:

1. Use your personal flash drives to store your work.
2. Do not alter any system settings on any workstation.
3. Do not steal. This is a federal crime. In many cases access to hardware and software is left open in order to serve you best. Please honor that trust.
4. Do not install any applications without permission.
5. Hacking is also a crime. Do not attempt to access network resources or devices that you do not have permission to use. You may occasionally find you have access to network folders or equipment you know nothing about. Please respect the privacy of other station users and protect our network by not accessing files, settings, devices, or other network resources that do not belong to you. Hacking from "outside" is also a potential threat. Please report suspicious occurrences of any kind at once (such as appearance or disappearance of files or folders, or unexplainable computer activity).
6. If you don't know what you are doing, please ask for help. We are here to help you.

Library

The Library is open to all Station residents. It is located on the ground floor of Aquarial building.

Station Availability

Use of the station requires application and approval of activities. We welcome students, researchers, educators, special groups, and conference groups.

Financial Aid

Students facing financial difficulties may apply for financial support from WSBS. Financial aid may include full or partial waiver of tuition, and room fees. At this time we are unable to assist with transportation costs to Poyakonda.

Volunteer Activities

The limited staff at WSBS constantly struggles to keep up with the many duties and demands inherent in running a field station. We are always open to initiative by students, faculty, researchers, or anyone else who has ideas about how to make WSBS a better place and wishes to put in the effort. Want to help out? Just ask!

Contact information

Email: info@wsbs-msu.ru

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Thank you for following the procedures and guidelines outlined here. Comments and suggestions for improving the quality of life and science at WSBS are always welcome.