

R205NEW

Bogoslova island, AS-205

Written by Vasily V. Pinchuk (R7AL)

“Only two things we’ll regret

On deathbed – that we are

A little loved and little traveled”

Mark Twain

Bogoslova island is one of the most remote and hard-to-reach uninhabited islands on Russian Far East. It’s located at the entrance to Natalii bay in a North-Eastern part of Kamchatka peninsula with no any settlements a hundred miles around.

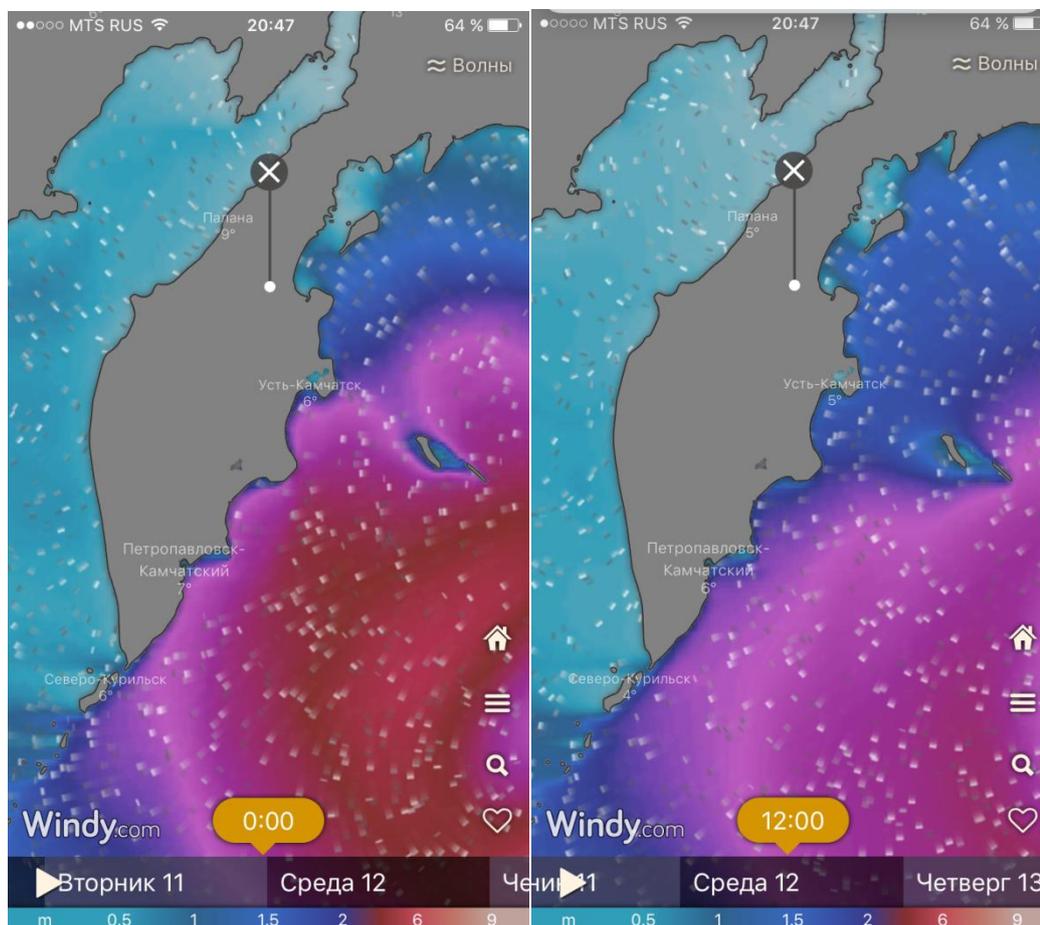
Until recently Bogoslova was not listed at IOTA Directory, but in accordance with last announcement of new IOTA groups, it was added to the list with the unique number AS-205.

The only way to get to this island is traveling by the sea from Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy city (the distance is almost 1200 km. one way). For this expedition we chartered sailing yacht “Oberon” with the experienced skipper, same guy who already (..)

The original schedule was is to set the sails on June, 9 immediately after returning from Paramushir, but the weather has made the adjustments. An extensive cyclone moved from east and according to the forecast should have collapsed on the coast.

Finally Andrey (the skipper) set the departure at midnight on June, 11. All the day long we were busy with yacht loading and pre-travel preparations. In the evening, when absolutely everything was ready for a long travel, we get the disturbing information on VHF from the fishing vessel, which was on Barents sea

somewhere not too far from the coast. They reported that they have 3.5 meter waves and squallied wind.



Weather forecast with the cyclone collapsed on the region

We were very worried about this information, but our skipper decided that we have no other choice and we need to make our way to the north as quickly as possible. Otherwise, we risked staying in Petropavlovsk for a few more days.

I can confidently say that I have some experience sailing in rough seas and not very susceptible to seasickness, but what happened the next 24 hours was a real nightmare. The ocean raged, covering our yacht with huge waves over and over again. It was impossible to stand, lie or move inside the cabin. I had to constantly strain my muscles and be extremely concentrated so as not to break my head. Different items that were not fixed well flew around the cabin and nobody cared about them. Albert UB9WLJ and two crew members developed severe seasickness. On the second day the weather began to calm down a little, but the yacht was still swaying a lot. In the remaining two days the ocean was more or less calm.



Sailing yacht "Oberon" before the departure from Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy



Lunch on a yacht after the storm

After we went into the Natalii bay and approached the northern side of Bogoslova island, the weather changed dramatically! Icy wind and fog gave way to bright sun and calm. Looking ahead, I'll say that Natalii bay has a fantastic micro climate and all three days on the island the weather was really perfect with the daytime temperature 18+C.



“Oberon” anchored at Natalii bay

Visual inspection revealed that there is a long pebble beach in the northern part of Bogoslova island. It promised us an easy landing and clear take-offs to the most important and distant regions, such as Europe and East Coast of NA. The location also was good enough for Japan, but Oceania and partly the West Coast were covering by the hill.

We launched the Zodiac and decided to go to reconnaissance trip to the island – me, skipper and one of the yacht's crew.

Soon after our landing we faced with the big problem – the whole coast was dotted with the bear tracks, as well as fresh bear stool. Guys told me that most likely the bears still somewhere on the island and staying here is not safe. After some discussion we decided to stay on the island accompanied by two guys of the yacht's crew on a regular basis. Their task will be to protect our camp and maintain a bonfire during our radio activity. Also the skipper insisted that Albert will stay onboard the yacht at least for the first night.

After returning to the yacht another unpleasant surprise awaited us – Vlad RK8A complained of poor health, fever and tinning. However, he flatly refused to stay on the yacht and we started unloading the equipment.

Thanks to the help of the yacht's crew it took no more than two hours to bring all our equipment to the meadow. Guys also installed the tents while we were busy with the antennas.



Our camp on Bogoslova island, AS-205NEW

We set up two antennas: 2-element VDA for 20 meters band on the high tide mark and EFHW (End-Feed Half Wave) for 30 meters.

Our plan was is to keep 14 MHz station running constantly, band condition permitting, as a main station with VDA and Power Amplifier for a long distance QSOs with Europe and NA. Second radio (100 Watts) were used simultaneously on 10 MHz to work with Far East and Oceania, when one of us did not sleep or busy with other things.

The first QSO from AS-205NEW was made at 20-23 UTC on June, 15 with the French station F6CSQ. 14 MHz was in a really good shape all the day long and we had a big pile-up.



VDA on the shore and view towards NA

The next morning Vlad's health improved and he was already able to operating on the air. Everything was going very well and after the first full day we logged more than 2000 QSOs.

We enjoyed our stay on the island – crystal clear air, pile-ups, majestic and untouched nature... Meanwhile guys were busy with diving and fishing. Thanks God there were no bears around and we let Albert to be with us on the island.

We continued to work non-stop, but on the third day the condition became poor and a polar path almost closed. It looks like a geo magnetic storm started , but anyway we were QRV even with the very low QSO-rate.

Last QSO from Bogoslova island AS-205 was made at 00-30 UTC on June, 19. Finally we archived 4435 QSOs.



Vasily R7AL (first day on the island)



Vlad RK8A (second day on the island)

R205NEW radio team wishes to express an outmost gratitude to Clubs, Foundations and Individual Donors for their trust, encouragement and support!!

Such a difficult and expensive IOTA projects are impossible without your help!! Thanks everyone for QSOs with AS-205 and see you soon on the air!!



R205NEW Radio Team