

# R26RRC

## Paramushir island, AS-204

Written by Vasily V. Pinchuk (R7AL)

*“The world is a book*

*And those who do not travel*

*Read only one page”*

*St. Augustine*

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AS-204 (Kurilskiye Islands North) – newly announced IOTA group, which was formed by splitting the entire Kuril ridge (IOTA: AS-025) into two parts. Northern Kurils consist of almost two dozen islands. Paramushir is the largest and only inhabited of all.

Originally our expedition to AS-204 was planned for the first decade of May, but due to a number of objective reasons, the trip was postponed to early June. Among other things, it helped us to optimize logistics and go to AS-205NEW immediately after returning from Paramushir.

The only more or less budget way to reach the island – boarding the ship “Gipanis”, which brings cargo and passengers from Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy to Severo-Kurilsk town, the only settlement on the island.

We formed the team, consisting of three operators: Vlad RK8A, Igor UA3EDQ and me, Vasily R7AL. Albert UB9WLJ, the grandson of RK8A, also entered the expedition team. Albert is 11 and he is newbie in HAM radio, but already has an expeditionary experience – he was member of R24RRC (AS-044) in 2017.

Vlad RK8A was on Paramushir island three years ago and made 500+ QSOs as UE23RRC/P. It was a wonderful experience and we had some useful information about the island. First of all, Vlad faced with a huge S 9+ QRM from AM Broadcast station, which is located just in a center of Severo-Kurilsk and we'll need to find a place for the radio camp somewhere outside of the town. Moreover,

the landscape is very hilly and we'll choose a good position with the clear take-offs to the most important directions.

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We flew to Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy on May 30 and ship to the island was scheduled a day later. We had some concerns about that the weather was bad with wind and incessant rain, but they did not materialize and after the 24-hour travel in a rough sea we finally reached Paramushir Island.



*Paramushir island as viewed from the sea*

The island met us with heavy rain and cold wind. The weather forecast promised rains for all coming week. We were prepared for the portable operation and had tents, sleeping bags and other touristic equipment with us, but it was problematic in such conditions. We went to the settlement to find some local helpers who could find a good place and work for us as a taxi.

Finally two hours later we were lucky to find the local, who owned an old wooden hut about one mile away from the town, not so far from the shore. The owner agreed to rent for the reasonable price.



*Main Street of Severo-Kurilsk town.*

Our QTH consisted of two rooms and small kitchen. Everything inside the hut was really decrepit and dusty, with the strong smell of damp, but anyway it's much better than tents in such a rainy weather conditions. The owner helped us to get all our gear inside and flooded the wood stove.

Having a quick snack, we immediately started to setting up the stations and antennas. It was plenty of space around our hut, so we placed the antennas at a sufficient distance from each other to avoid of possible interference from one station to another. The antennas were a 2-element Vertical Dipole Arrays for 20 and 17 meter bands, quarter-wave Vertical for 30 meters and W3DZZ for 30/40/80 meter bands.

After the quick check we found that AM broadcast station makes big QRM in few portions of 20 meters above the CW sub-band and also on 40 meters – all other frequencies more or less clear.

Our first QSO from AS-204NEW was made 1-th of June at 01-26 UTC on 17 meters with the Russian station RW0LT. Few hours later, after all the work has been done, we were having two stations running in a same time, equipped with 600 Watts Power Amplifier each.



*Igor UA3EDQ and Vlad RK8A busy with antennas*



*Our QTH with installed antennas*

Of course, the most common band was 20 meters with some short openings on 30 and 17 meter bands. Due to a bad solar condition, we experienced some difficulties to work distant regions, such as East Coast of NA and Western Europe. During the first days of our expedition we learned all the short openings to these directions and always turned the antennas.



*Vasily R7AL at the key (Operating position #1)*

We did our best but were not completely satisfied with the result, that's why we decided to run FT8 mode to give more chances for "low pistols". It allowed us to logged many more unique stations and make them happy with the ATNi.

One week on Paramushir Island passed very quickly. Ship schedule was not clear so we were keeping one station running until the last minutes. R26RRC finished the operation on June 08 at 06-55 UTC with the final result 6500+ QSOs.

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On behalf of all team members of R26RRC, I express my gratitude to Foundations, Clubs and all individual Donors for Support!!

Thanks everyone for QSOs with AS-204NEW.



*R26RRC team onboard "Gipanis" (L-R: Igor UA3EDQ, Vasily R7AL, Albert UB9WLJ, Vlad RK8A)*