



Marine Tourism in the South East of Russia: The State and Development Tendencies

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ABSTRACT

The article deals with history of emergence of marine tourism in the South East of Russian Federation. It analyzes contemporary approaches to arrangement of marine tourism, defines the priority kinds of sea holidays, emphasizes problems of cruise carriages and outlines the main trends in the development of marine tourism.

Keywords: Marine Tourism, Coast of Peter the Great Bay, Expedition Cruise Tourism, Yachting, Primorsky Region

JEL Classifications: F5, L9, Z3

1. INTRODUCTION

For the last 15 years, marine tourism has become one of the most popular and fast growing segments of the market and the economic basis for many coastal countries of the world (Grushechko, 2009). In Russia marine tourism is viewed as one of the most profitable and intensively developing branches of economy. Positive dynamics of marine tourism business development is associated before other things with cruise trips to St. Petersburg, Kaliningrad, Murmansk, Archangelsk in the North East of Russia, to Sochi in the South and from Kamchatka Coast to Peter the Great Bay in the Sea of Japan (Tutushkina, 2006).

In 2015, the volume of sales of foreign cruise tours in Russia has grown by about 70%. Overseas companies have introduced Russian-speaking services on 9 of their liners. There have been registered tens of overseas liners' calls at Russian ports.

The most important factor of the cruise tours development has been the Russian service activities that are expected to employ the Russian speaking staff at the reception and offer restaurant menus in Russian. For example, Costa Cruises have introduced Russian service on 9 sea liners navigating in the Mediterranean

and the Caribbean Sea. Among the factors promoting for cruise tours' sales are popularity of family tourism, growing demand for mixed kinds of rest as well as IC technologies and simplifying the visa procedures (Hall, 2001). The most popular cruise tours have become those arranged according to European system, which presupposes a sea trip with calls at different ports and excursions.

The other sort of cruises that have become of increasing demand are American style tours focusing on beach holidays at the ports of call along the cruise itinerary (Navrozova and Mikhailova, 2012).

In the last years' marine tourism has been positioned with the many functional activities system aimed at utilization of sea water areas and coastal resources as well as the tourist services market potential.

2. METHODOLOGY

Marine tourism as a type of water tourism determined by tourists' demands is aimed at satisfying tourists' needs both in active and passive holiday activities using resources of seawater area, coastal areas for beaches and seacoast infrastructure (Derkacheva, 2014). Marine tourism destination includes a basic element of sea water

area with water depth and the bottom which can be used to meet diverse tourists' needs, the other marine tourism destination element being the territory within the coastal border line with its natural resources and infrastructural objects supplying services for tourists.

3. RESULTS

The marine tourism contribution to the regional economy of Primorye is absolutely inconsiderable, this being the consequence of rather weak investment possibilities inherent to the period of marine holiday industry transition to a new quality level and poor development of marine tourism recreation market.

At the present time the number of foreign tourists entering the territory of the Russian Far East, does not exceed 13% of the total tourist traffic; the Chinese citizens dominated among the other visitors. The reasons of the low attractiveness for foreign tourists are well known and are primarily associated with high transport costs, lack of infrastructure, low level of service at extremely high prices (Kosolapov et al., 2016).

Marine tourism in Primorsky Region goes back to the first arranged in 1965 2-week cruise tour from Vladivostok to the isles of Japan with calls at the ports of Tokyo, Kobe, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Niigata and Otaru. Since 1966 the "Intourist" tour operator has annually arranged cruise tours "Across South East Asian Countries." From the year of 1966-1976 Primorye Regional Council on Tourism and Vladivostok bureau of Travel and Excursions have offered sea cruises "From Winter to Summer." This itinerary did not plan going ashore notwithstanding the fact that cruise liners were frequently passing picturesque exotic islands. Tourists used to watch dolphins playing and sharks gliding or admire gorgeous tropical sunsets and Southern hemisphere constellations from board ship. Such cruise tours were usually arranged from December to February and were of one of the two kinds – 15 day ones on the "Khabarovsk" motor vessel and those lasting for 22 days on the "Rus" and "Ilyich" passenger ships.

Cruises to Equator have proved very popular too. Each sea liner accommodated up to 600 tourists from 60% to 70% of cities, regions and territories of the USSR. Many of the passengers (48%) lived in the North of Siberia and the Far East and believed such voyages to be a good resource to recover their physical and psychological strength (Nesov, 2009).

Starting from the period of 1974 Primorye Bureau of Travels and Excursions organized on a regular basis a 20-day route "Across the Land and Sea of the Far East" on board passenger ships the "Khabarovsk," "Maria Ulyanova," "Moisey Uritsky," each liner accommodating up to 300 passengers. The tour started in Vladivostok and included calls to the ports of Kholmsk in Sakhalin island, Magadan, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, the Russkaya Harbour (Kamchatka), the Kuril Islands of Paramushir, Iturup and Shikotan. Having navigated through Sangarsky channel cruise ships came back into Peter the Great Bay and called at Narva Bay in Khasan region of Primorsky Territory or at the reserve territory of Popov island. When in a port tourists had guided tours

and review excursions. They could enjoy the views of volcanoes of Kamchatka and the Kuril Islands, take part in helicopter tours to the famous valley of gaisers or watch the process of storing spotted deer horns on the Sakhalin island and fish breeding at fishery factories on the isle of Iturup. During sea transfers tourists participated in different sporting events and competitions.

Later on early in the 21st century cruise ships were destined either to be sent to foreign wharfs for long-term repairs or handed in to other ports of Russia. After its modernization the symbol of FESCO cruise tourism – the motor ship "Rus" was renamed into the "SC Atlantic" and on June 2 2010 opened the regular cruise service operations in the Baltic. The rest of the passenger ships registered at the port of Vladivostok are not equipped with births and therefore cannot be used for long cruise itineraries.

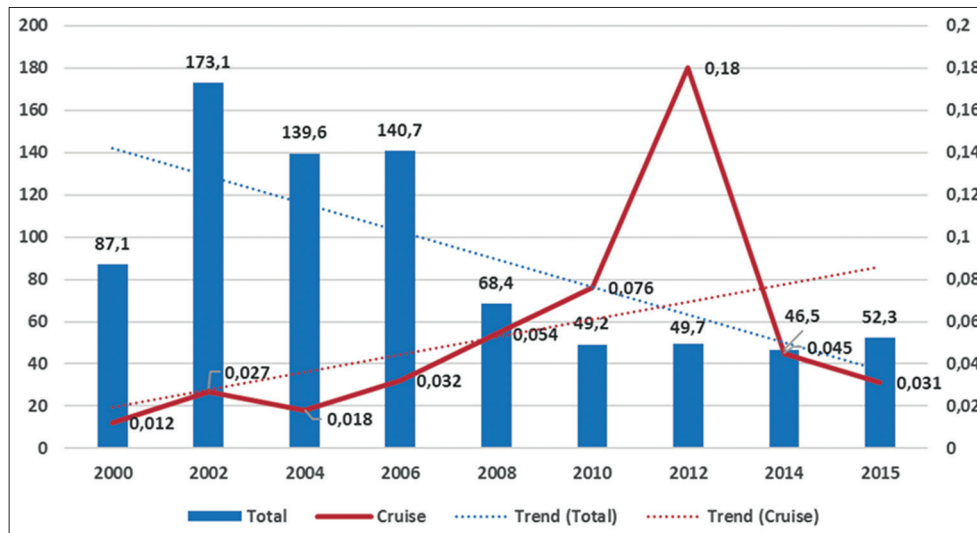
As one can see the cruise tour industry in Primorsky Region has surrendered its market positions to foreign companies.

At present, the port of Vladivostok is rated second in Russia after St. Petersburg in the number of calls of foreign cruise ships. Beginning in April through to October 5-9 cruise ships flying the flags of Japan, Netherlands, Bahamas etc. are calling here annually. The "Diamond Princess" is the most frequent guest of the port. Her 1335 cabins of 15-70 m² accommodate 2670 passengers from Europe, America, Australia and Asia. Among other ships often calling at Vladivostok are motor ships "Nippon," "Marry," "Azukall," "Zoandam," "Dawn Princess," "Amadea," "Legend of Seas" (the second in size after "Diamond Princess" ship accommodating 2076 passengers in her cabins).

1 June 2009 saw the beginning of regular cargo – passenger ferry line connecting Primorsky Region with Japan and republic of Korea. A comfortable ferry "Eastern Dream" rooms 500 people capable to visit ports of Pusan and Yokohama.

The number of cruise tourists does not exceed 0.4% of the total number of tourists coming to Vladivostok. In the period of 2004-2012, the annual increase of cruise tourists was accounted for by the growing interest of foreign tourists to the Russian city in the swing of preparations for the 2012 APEC summit reception of overseas delegations. In the years to follow the cruise activities sharply decreased and the number of tourists in 2015 got nearer to the statistics of 2006 (0.031-0.032 million people). Nevertheless, the trend line of cruise tourists keeps the growth tendencies unlike the total trend of general tourists' arrivals (Figure 1).

Such cruise giants as Voyager of the Seas, Mariner of the Seas, Quantum of the Seas of the Royal Caribbean International Company and others are ready to pay visits to the port of Vladivostok. However, many of the modern cruise ships cannot moor in the port due to insufficient depth of water along the berthing space of for passenger ships. The existing port infrastructure limits the reception of large (more than 300 m long and 8.8 m deadweight) passenger ships. According to International Safety Navigation Regulations and ship owners' rules and requirements the depth of water in the mooring area must be 1 m deeper than the ship's draught. This is why large cruise liners cannot make calls at the

Figure 1: The number of tourists' arrivals to the port of Vladivostok in 2000-2015 on the total and on cruise ships (in million people)

port of Vladivostok. The above limitations were introduced in 2013 when average size cruise vessels navigating in the Asian quarters had been replaced by much larger ships.

During their stays in the port of Vladivostok the tourists are offered 2-4 h programs including visits to Vladivostok Orthodox gymnasium, catholic and Orthodox churches and cathedrals. Foreign guests may be acquainted with fine Vladivostok bridges, FEFU campus, forts of Vladivostok, a sea fortress and many other historical and modern attractions.

Vladivostok tour operators offer a 45 km tour from the city of Vladivostok to the railway station Uglovaya of Trans Siberian Railway – the longest world railway. Japanese tourists are much attracted by a sort of agricultural excursion “A visit to the citizens’ summer cottages (dachas)” where the guests are delighted to taste fresh vegetables, berries and fruits, to learn to cook shashlyks (barbecues) and to share their own agricultural experience. However, the majority of tourists prefer individual walks about the city.

As to marine tours Vladivostok tour operators’ offers are usually limited by 8-4 day cruises on board the rented ship across the water area of Peter the Great Bay with excursions along ecological paths of the Far East Marine Reserve Area, visits to watch large sea seals. In summer season Vladivostok tourist firms arrange 2 h sea trips named “the Lights of Vladivostok at Night” (for the adults) and “Hold Ahead Brave Captains!” (for the whole of the family) in the waters of the Golden Horn Bay and the Amur Bay. At weekends they offer a sea trip “A Voyage across Peter the Great Bay” with a short beach holiday on uninhabited islands of Pakhtusov and Rickord as well as individual fishing tours with a beach rest on the isles of Russky, Shkota, Popov, Two Brothers, Pakhtusov, Reineke and Ricord.

To mention transport means for sea trips it might be taken into consideration that a number of cruise boats of the “Pallada” type accommodating 40 people and the “Passat” type for 60 are usually rented for short “walks” in the sea, and a VIP class ship the “Hamadory” with a banquet and 2 VIP banquet halls for 55

and 17 people accordingly is used to hold business meetings and conferences. If there are small groups of tourists up to 10 people, tour operators can rent small sailing ships and boats.

Marine tourism market in Primorsky Region needs to be further developed. The purposeful prospects might target joint utilization of marine water and coast areas. Such multifunctional approach to the use of water and coast recreation potential seems more prospective than merely arranging traditional sea trips and cruises. This approach is sharing advantages of recreational activities in water area (wind surfing, rowing, water skiing, diving, fishing rental of sea boats, cruise expeditions) and those of beach holidays. In different recreation programs these purposes could be combined or if necessary one of them can prevail.

4. CONCLUSION

The resource potential of Primorsky Region is absolutely adequate for the development of the following attractive kinds of marine tourism.

1. Sailing tourism accompanied by costal tourist services: Prerequisites for its development are observed in the process of growing popularity of holidays on water and increasing number of motor and sailing ships as well as great interest to sailing tours in Peter the Great Bay displayed by tourists from South East Asia. The development of sailing tourism envisages arrangement of the whole complex of such services as:
 - Rentals of cruising and sporting boats both manned and unmanned, the above rentals being possible if tourists are qualified and deliver certificates;
 - Reception and handling of tourists’ own boats in the ports and at anchorages;
 - development of exclusive sailing itineraries and provisions of necessary infrastructure;
 - Arrangement of sailing regattas and participation in regular international races;
 - Providing training in sailing ship navigation in Russia and abroad. Approval of and assistance in acquiring international certificates;

- Technical and legal advisory, assistance in acquiring visas and other documents necessary for sailing cruise tours;
- Informational provisions.

Factors restraining the development of sailing tourism are those connected with:

- Inadequate navigational equipment of fairways in the water areas attractive for small size passenger shipping;
- Inferior informational supply for sailing boats (such as charts, schemes, pilot books and the like information materials for certain navigation areas);
- Underdevelopment of mooring and coastal infrastructure, lack of sailing ports, mooring and anchoring areas, seasonal visiting berths and wharves, cargo chutes for trailers on the shore;
- Lack of fuel stations for bunkering sailing ships and boats as well as maintenance centers for sailing equipment.

2. Cruise and expedition tourism making use of small and medium size fleet for cruise tours in the water area of Peter the Great Bay and along the coast of East and North of Primorye.

Cruise and expedition tourism in Primorye is represented by two itineraries. The first one is across the water area of Peter the Great Bay with the call at the only in Russia Far East State Reserve Zone. The survey made in 2014 of 350 Vladivostok citizens and guests demonstrated a great interest to expeditions and cruise tours along the shores of Primorsky Region introducing the visitors to seascapes and coastal landscapes of reserve zones in Kedrovaya Pad, Lazovsky, Sikhote Alinsky and the Far East State Reserve Zone.

The length of an expedition cruise depends on the working speed of the ship and the time spent ashore and on average constitutes 10-12 days.

The second itinerary of an expedition cruise may pass through Peter the Great Bay with going ashore on special boats and visiting the Posyet Grotto, Nasimov spit, Krabbe Peninsular, the Furugelma Isles and the Ostrovok Falshivy Cape (Kulikov, 2012).

3. Development of chain centers for marine tourism (diving, surfing, wind surfing ones) and creation of specialized training centers for hiring marine equipment and the like on shore. Improving the quality of services.

Weather conditions and temperature of water in Peter the Great Bay from June to the middle of September are favorable for classical surfing. For those who are well trained and have a warm costume as well as for big wave lovers the sea season is prolonged from late May to late October. Every year Ussuriysk Bay water area turns into the exciting place of competitions in classical surfing, cold water surfing including. Vladivostok public diving

centers arrange the deliveries of underwater swimmers to the diving bases.

4. The development of winter kinds of tourism and rest with view to using seawater and coast areas.

Sunny and soft winters on the shores of Peter the Great Bay offer very good conditions for arrangement of winter holidays on the coast and water. The length of sunshine period here can be favorably compared to that in Sochi. Within 120 days of winter season on the coast of Peter the Great Bay there are 42 comfortable and 51 sub comfortable weather periods that can be quite acceptable for arrangement of winter holidays (Derkacheva, 2000).

Practically all round the year tourist resorts on the coast offer winter ice fishing services. The package tour includes accommodation, tree meals catering services, transfers to the ice patches, fishing instructions, sliding from snow hills and taking a Russian bath.

There may emerge a new tendency in arranging winter kinds of rest and sports on the icy areas – that of snow skating and kite surfing.

All the above activities must promote marine tourism making it a popular and profitable type of marine business. We dare to stress the idea that the most significant condition for the complex development of marine tourism in Primorsky Region is consumer oriented marketing and a high level of the tourist product on offer.

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