

Karaganda Buketov University
Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan
Severtsov Institute of Ecology and Evolution of the Russian Academy of Sciences



IX Field School on Soil Zoology and Ecology for Young Scientists

FIRST CALL

Dear colleagues!

We would like to invite you to participate in the IX Field School on Soil Zoology and Ecology for Young Scientists, which will be held on **August 18–24, 2025** at Karaganda Buketov University (KBU), Karaganda, Kazakhstan. The School in 2025 is dedicated to modelling of soil invertebrate habitats and biodiversity. The program includes lectures and practical sessions by leading scientists in the area. The practical sessions will be divided into two levels: for beginners and those already experienced in species distribution modelling. The working languages are English and Russian.

For young colleagues, participation in the School is a step towards joining the professional scientific community, an opportunity to get introduced to modern concepts and new methods of soil ecology, to gain practical skills in habitat modelling, and to discuss their own research and difficulties with experienced colleagues. All participants will receive certificates.

The field part of the School will be held on August 23 and 24 at the KBU field station in the [Karkarala Nature Park](#) (~200 km east from Karaganda). During the field trip, participants will have an opportunity to see an ancient mountain range with relict boreal forests and get practical skills on methods of collecting soil invertebrates.

Important Dates

December 9 – the First call

February 1 – start of registration and the Second letter

April 20 – end of registration

May 1 – informing about the results of the competitive selection of School participants

July 1 – the Third letter

August 18–24 – event conducting

Organizing Committee

Asylbek Zeinidenov, PhD, professor, vice-rector for science, [KBU](#)

Alexei Tiunov, Doctor of Science, Corresponding Member of RAS, head of laboratory, [IEE RAS](#)

Konstantin Gongalsky, Doctor of Science, Professor RAS, head of laboratory, [IEE RAS](#)

Asel Zhumina, PhD, associate Professor, dean of Geography and Biological faculty, KBU

Aidar Aitkulov, PhD, associate Professor, KBU

Margarita Ishmuratova, PhD, head of laboratory, Professor-researcher, KBU

Maxim Shashkov, senior researcher, KBU

Secretariat

Natalya Ivanova, PhD, senior researcher, [Institute of Mathematical Problems of Biology of the Russian Academy of Sciences](#)

Aida Madieva, senior lecturer, KBU

E-mail for communication soil.zoology.ru@gmail.com **Telegram channel** https://t.me/soil_zool

Invited lecturers and mentors (confirmed participation, the list is under updating)

Helen Phillips, PhD, Assistant Professor, [University of Helsinki](#) (to be confirmed)

Pallierter De Smedt, PhD, postdoctoral researcher, [Ghent University](#), Ghent, Belgium

Lubomir Penev, PhD, Professor in Ecology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, [Pensoft Publishers](#), Sofia, Bulgaria

Elena Razenkova, PhD, research scientist, [Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources](#), Madison, USA

Eugeny Vorobeichik, Doctor of Science, head of laboratory, [Institute of Plant and Animal Ecology of the Ural Branch of RAS](#), Ekaterinburg, Russia

Anna Geraskina, PhD, head of laboratory, [Center of Forest Ecology and Productivity RAS](#), Moscow, Russia

Veronika Abukeniva, PhD, associated professor of KBU

Maxim Shashkov, senior researcher of KBU

Artëm Sozontov, PhD, senior researcher, IPAE of the Ural Branch of RAS, Ekaterinburg, Russia

Natalya Ivanova, PhD, senior researcher, [Institute of Mathematical Problems of Biology RAS](#), Pushchino, Russia

Preliminary programme

August 18, Monday. School opening. An introduction to species distribution modelling and research cases in soil zoology. *Welcome party.*

August 19, Tuesday. Input data on species distribution (occurrences from the GBIF portal and observations from the iNaturalist citizen science system, data mining from literature), GBIF data retrieval practices, and basic principles of data quality assessment and data cleaning. Data papers.

August 20 августа, Wednesday. Input environmental data (raster layers), practice in selecting and processing raster data. The main concepts of modelling algorithms.

August 21, Thursday. Practice on model building and result evaluation.

August 22, Friday. How to prepare a paper on habitat suitability modelling. Problems arising during the distribution modelling of soil invertebrates. Discussion. Summarising the results of the School. Travel to Karkarala Nature Park.

August 23 and 24, Saturday and Sunday. Field trip.

Valuable Information

Venue. Karaganda Buketov University, Karaganda, Kazakhstan ([Universitetskaya st., 28](#))

Format of School. On-site. Theoretical and training sessions will be held from 9.00 to 19.00 with a break for lunch and two coffee breaks.

Registration fee. Not required.

Participants number. 25 students.

Language. The main working languages are English and Russian. The keynote lectures will be in English, with the practical part mostly in Russian, depending on participants applied.

Audience. There are no formal restrictions regarding the age of participants. For practical lessons, we are intended to divide participants into two groups: beginner and advanced. It is desirable for participants to have a laptop.

Requirements for beginners: spreadsheet processing experience, basic skills in GIS.

Requirements for advanced: confident experience with spreadsheets, experience on vector and raster spatial data processing, programming experience with R.

The number of participants is limited by the availability of trained mentors, so we will select participants based on the information provided during registration.

Travel. For citizens of most countries in Europe, America, and Asia, no visa is required to enter Kazakhstan, you can verify [here](#). The nearest international airport is located in Astana (200 km north of Karaganda), with frequent flights from Istanbul, Frankfurt am Main, Dubai, and other airline hubs. The transfer to Karaganda a day before the event and after the conclusion will be arranged. Take in mind that the end of August is a season of vacation, so it is advisable to order tickets in advance. Feel free to contact the organising committee for better route planning.

Money. The currency of Kazakhstan is the tenge. The international payment systems are working here without any restrictions. You can also exchange cash euros, US dollars, and rubles without any difficulties.

Accommodation. Participants can stay in the student dormitory (rooms for 2-3 people) free of charge for the duration of the School. The dormitory is located on the campus, 500 m away from the venue. More comfortable accommodation options are available in the hotels of the city. Accommodation in the hotel is paid by the participants themselves. If necessary, the organising committee will assist in booking.

Meal. You can have lunch in the University's canteen or in the nearest cafeterias around the University.

Field trip to [Karkaraly Nature Park](#). The field trip will be held at the station of the University in the vicinity of Karkaralinsk. Accommodation: summer cabins, outdoor showers, electricity, mobile network is not stable. You can bring a tent if you like, as the weather at this season is usually quite warm. Arrival at the field station is scheduled for Friday, August 22, and return to Karaganda on Sunday evening, August 24.

Looking forward to seeing you in Karaganda!