

'Robinson Crusoe' Saved in White Sea

October 18, 2011

The  **Moscow Times**

A 25-year-old Arkhangelsk resident was on the verge of slashing his wrists after 16 days on a remote, barren island in the White Sea when he was saved by a rescue helicopter — that was not looking for him.

This brief, northern take on a Daniel Defoe novel took place not far from the Solovki Archipelago, 150 kilometers from the Arctic Circle, and was [reported](#) Monday by the Arkhangelsk regional branch of the Emergency Situations Ministry.

The stranded man, identified only as Sergei, told rescuers that he had set out from Arkhangelsk in a wooden boat on Oct. 1 to harvest seaweed, but the vessel sprang a leak and sank in a storm.

Sergei managed to swim to Malaya Sennukha, one of the small stony islets dotting the area. There he survived on seaweed and rainwater, taking shelter in a makeshift dwelling of stones and a few wooden planks.

He said he gave up looking for passing ships three days before rescue and was about to take his own life when the helicopter flew overhead. When he heard the rotor, he managed to get

up and wave down the aircraft.

Curiously, no one had reported Sergei missing. The helicopter was looking for survivors from another seafaring incident, in which a motorboat with a monk and a worker from a nearby Orthodox Christian monastery sank in the vicinity of the archipelago last Thursday.

The monk's body was recovered on Monday, but the search for the worker continues. Sergei, meanwhile, was given a bite to eat and some hot tea — as well as medical treatment for malnutrition and hypothermia.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2011/10/18/robinson-crusoe-saved-in-white-sea-a10245>