

The picture will be almost complete when one adds that the so-called "rationed" fish that break through the fence come under pressure from poachers. Extremely well-organized and well-equipped bandits destroy another 10,000 or so "egg carriers" each year. What's more, they look on the legally sanctioned fence across the river as a kind of absolution for their wrongdoing. In such an immoral atmosphere, all inspections or prohibitions are useless. The principle "What you protect belongs to you" is flourishing. Things have come to such a point that the Troitsko-Pechora Regional Executive Committee was forced recently to overhaul its Fishery Inspection Service and transfer responsibility for protection of fish resources (and it is precisely here that the principal spawning rivers are located) to inspectors from Ukhta, who are stationed 200 kilometres from the Pechora.

Pollution of the river has already reached catastrophic proportions. Every year, workers of the oil, geological and other sectors discharge over 11,000 tonnes of oil and oil products into the river and into the streams of the Pechora Basin. To dilute this poison to a level of maximum allowable concentration would require a minimum of 230 cubic kilometres of water, twice the present flow of this northern river. Just last year, an emergency had to be handled at Borehole Number 9 of the Nar'yan-Mar Oil Prospecting Expedition of the "Arkhangelskgeologiya" (Arkhangelsk Geological) Corporation. For seven years, millions of cubic meters of sulfur condensate has been thrown into Korovinskaya Bay, which is a kind of freshwater incubator for the Pechora.

The head of the expedition, before making a safe departure, left behind this explanation: "The cause of the accident was the technically inept work