

they say, at the limit of its biological capabilities, having found a narrow ecological niche in the harsh Transbaikalian climate. Fortunately, this niche exists in places that are fairly inaccessible, mainly in mountains at altitudes of 1,200 to 2,000 metres above sea level. All the same, the loggers were prepared to take the pine even under these conditions.

I will cite some precise data. In 1983 Pinus sibirica stands encompassed an area of 846,300 hectares. In 1988 this had grown to 956,300 hectares. It is good to know that we foresters had contributed to this increase. In Transbaikalia, regrowth of Siberian pine frequently occurs in the forests of larch and pine surrounding the Pinus sibirica forests. This is the "handiwork" of the tireless natural seed scatterer - the nutcracker. We are keeping a special inventory of such forests. In allowing the loggers in, we are strictly adhering to the felling procedure where there is maximum preservation of regrowth.

There is another, equally important side of the problem. While we have succeeded in preserving the Siberian pine forests, we have not yet learned how to use them correctly. Take the main wealth of these forests - the pine nut. Today, unfortunately, we are harvesting it in minute quantities. There is a whole mass of reasons for this, the first being that these nut harvesting zones are poorly served by roads. It is true that roads are costly under these conditions, but has anyone ever estimated their possible effectiveness or unprofitableness? Or recommended any other method of harvesting the nuts, for instance, by using horses? The answer is, no one has.