

However, it proved difficult to call a halt. There were hundreds of customers for the sand and gravel dredged up from the River Sob', and here we are also dealing with the question of last year's flooding in the southern regions of the Tyumen' Oblast. So, once again, we were faced with an "urgent" situation and once again special permission to produce sand and gravel was agreed upon. By the end of the season, the earth-moving machinery had progressed to within thirty five kilometres from the mouth of the river. The machinery left behind a deep navigable channel, a badly damaged benthos and unsightly tailings along the banks.

According to Inspector E. Lebedev, the workers employed by the Okrug Fish-Protection Inspectorate, who are bound by the decisions taken by higher authorities and who are forced into the role of passive observers, also came to their own conclusions: the large lower spawning grounds were totally destroyed and the feeding grounds were also wiped out. The fish arriving to spawn, were forced to feed on their own roe. Nine wintering holes were razed and in all probability, the fishes' wintering conditions looked like being extremely difficult.

That is exactly what happened. In all weathers, the water in the Sob' was rich in oxygen, because it poured over the surface of the ice of the frozen shallows and then ran into the wintering holes, where it maintained life. These same shallows prevented the oxygen-deficient water of the Ob' from penetrating the wintering holes. However, by 1988 man had literally carted away the shallows and this spring, when the ice receded, an awful situation appeared: thousands of dead roach, ides, sturgeon and other fish lay whitening along the banks of the