

Korovinskaya Guba is a feeding ground for navaga, cisco and other types of whitefish. Salmon cross it on their way to spawning. In the seventies, great efforts were made to preserve these species of fish and increase their numbers. As a result, the cisco stock, for example, had started to grow. Ichthyologists unanimously call 1980 the turning point after which an abrupt decline began. The numbers of whitefish in Pechora started to fall not only because their usual habitats were "lost," but also because fish with underdeveloped or diseased sexual organs (up to 62 percent of the males) turned up in the school. The coefficient of natural reproduction dropped more than twofold. And during all those years fish caught in Korovinskaya Guba and environs were being eaten by local inhabitants and people living in other regions of the country.

"This summer I visited the 'Kumzha' well," said T. Osipova, an ichthyologist with the Komi Fisheries Management Directorate. "What I saw completely changed all my ideas about the scope of the damage. The craters left at the site of the well are literally 50 metres from the sea and 30 metres from the river bed. Despite a strong wind, gas could be smelt in the air. The amount of water pollution is enormous. Was there radioactive contamination of the water at the same time as it was being contaminated chemically? I don't think that anyone will tell the truth about this today."

But we simply must find out whether that happened or not. It certainly is possible that an "echo" of the nuclear explosion remains there even today.

... The departments do not part with their secrets willingly. By holding on to them they can shield those who are guilty from having to answer for their actions. That's the way it was at the beginning of the eighties also. S. Perov, chief engineer of the Nar'yan Mar Oil and Gas Prospecting Expedition, for example, whose work at the time was characterized as one of the factors which contributed to the accident, became head of the above-mentioned expedition and later even Director General of the large "Irkutskgeologiya" Combine.