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Incineration plant on Novaya Zemlya to begin working 4 years ahead of plan

The initial date was scheduled for 2024

ARKHANGELSK, February 13. /TASS/. An incineration facility on the Novaya Zemlya archipelago will be built in 2020, which is 4 years earlier than the region has planned, the regional administration's press service told TASS on Wednesday.

The local authorities have announced emergency on Novaya Zemlya, which suffers an "invasion" of polar bears. At least 52 polar bears were spotted near the settlement of Belushya Guba. There were cases of wild animals' aggression when they attacked people and entered residential buildings and offices. Experts name climate changes, seasonal migration and open dumps among the "invasion's" possible reasons.

"The commission [on waste treatment] has supported the change of due dates for an incineration facility on Novaya Zemlya from 2024 to 2020," the press service told TASS.

The open dump near the Belushya Guba settlement will be closed by 2020, the administration's Head Zhigansha Musin told TASS. "I do not doubt that open dumps attract bears," he said. "The dumps must be closed."

The climate change

At the same time, the official continued, closing dumps cannot be the only solution to stop polar bears from approaching settlements.

"I have been on Novaya Zemlya since 1983, but there have never been so many polar bears in the vicinity. I am not an expert, but due to the warming, the ice retreats from Novaya Zemlya. In the 1980s, even in summer, ice remained along the archipelago, while now the sea area to Franz Josef Land remains free from ice," Musin said.

However, he continued, the number of bears has declined as ice began covering the sea. "During the "invasion," the sea by Belushya Guba was without ice. Later on, in late January - early February, frosts became stronger, and this explains why the bears have retreated - simply because they got the opportunity to use ice, which for them is a hunting platform," he said.

According to the official, the locals have not seen polar bears in the settlement lately. "Yesterday, 20 bears were seen near the settlement, and today - 12," he said.

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