

Beavers Blamed for Road Collapsing in Russia's Tyumen Region

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When a small section of a federal highway collapsed Tuesday in the Tyumen region, local authorities were quick to blame beavers, Ura.ru news website reported.

But some have begun to suspect that beavers are being used as a convenient scapegoat for the authorities when negligence by officials or poor workmanship is actually to blame.

A driver noticed a crater on the surface of the Irbitsky federal highway on Tuesday evening and notified the authorities, Ura.ru reported. After a swift investigation into the matter, local traffic police determined that a family of beavers had taken up residence under the road and was to blame for the damage.

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report said, causing the water to build up and erode part of the road.

“We will have to alter the dam to restore the water flow in the culvert, but no one will remove it or do anything to hurt the beavers,” Anzhela Borisova, a spokeswoman for regional traffic police, was cited by Ura.ru as saying.

She promised the repair works on the highway would be finished by the end of the day.

Local residents commenting on the news in social networks and on online forums showed reluctance to believe it was the hapless rodents' fault, however.

“Maybe someone should tear off the beavers' arms for laying the asphalt badly?” one user wrote on car72.ru, a local online forum for drivers.

In recent months, beavers have been blamed for a range of mishaps all over the country.

Earlier this month, the engineers of the rodent world were accused of gnawing through signaling cable of the iconic Trans-Siberian Railroad, prompting local police and railway workers to rush to the scene to prevent an accident.

Last year beavers were also blamed for a road collapsing in the Sverdlovsk region, but were later exonerated.

They had built a dam in a culvert, which caused the water to build up and wash away part of the ground, like in the Tyumen region — but local police who investigated the incident found that road workers had neglected their duty to monitor the infrastructure and clean the pipes as needed, Vesti.ru news website reported at the time.

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