

More biodiversity at Chernobyl

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Nineteen years after the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear plant, researchers say the surrounding land in Ukraine has more biodiversity.

Some 100 species on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature Red List of threatened species, as well as bear and wolf, have been found in the evacuated zone, says Viktor Dolin, of the Ukrainian National Academy of Sciences in Kiev, reported the Moscow News Thursday.

There are a lot of mutations in species but they get weeded out and many young fish living in the reactor's cooling ponds are deformed. But adults tend to be healthy, implying that those harmed by radiation die young, said James Morris of the University of South Carolina.

However, with some 40 different radioactive elements -- including strontium-90 and decay products of uranium and plutonium -- released into the exclusion zone, it will be many hundreds of millennia before humans could live in the area again, said Dolin.

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