

Russia May Resume Sturgeon Fishing

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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An explosion of poaching for Caspian sturgeon led to a catastrophic population loss in the years after the break up of the Soviet Union. Above, women selling sturgeon at a market in Turkmenbashi, Turkmenistan. **Flydime**

Russia may resume sturgeon fishing in five years, a senior fisheries official said Thursday.

Andrei Krainy, the head of the Federal Fisheries Agency, said the current ban on fishing for sturgeon could be lifted if other Caspian states agreed to a five-year moratorium first to allow populations to recover.

"In five years, and I say this very cautiously, we could possibly resume industrial fishing for sturgeon," he said at a press conference, Interfax reported.

Krainy said Russia's proposal for a blanket moratorium on sturgeon fishing in the Caspian has already won backing from Azerbaijan, Iran and Kazakhstan. Only Turkmenistan continues to hold out.

An explosion of poaching for Caspian sturgeon, whose eggs provide lucrative black caviar, led to a catastrophic population loss in the years after the break up of the Soviet Union.

Russia banned all commercial fishing for sturgeon in 2002, although there is an exemption for scientific research. The only legally available caviar in the country now comes from farmed fish.

Krainy said the agency would make 250 million rubles (\$7.68 million) available to fisheries in the Astrakhan and Rostov regions to support sturgeon populations in 2013.

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