

Belarussian President Boasts of Bigger Fish Than Putin's

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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"Mine's bigger than yours."

It is perhaps the starkest manifestation of macho competition known to mankind, and now Belarussian President Alexander Lukashenko appears to be challenging President Vladimir Putin to a war of size.

Last week, the Kremlin released footage showing Putin reeling in — and kissing — a pike that allegedly weighed 21 kilograms from a Siberian lake.

Not to be outdone, Lukashenko this week boasted to his officials that he had recently caught a 57-kilogram catfish in the Pripjat River, which flows through the area once contaminated by radiation from the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in neighboring Ukraine, according to a media report Wednesday.

"I personally hauled in a catfish weighing 57 kilograms! I caught three catfish: 57, 24 and 7 kilograms," Lukashenko said during a meeting Tuesday with Belarussian officials devoted to new fishing and hunting regulations in the former Soviet state. Footage of the meeting was released online by Belarussian TV channel ONT.

"It was the same length as me," a Belarus deputy prime minister said, referring to the size of the giant fish. "Not the same weight as you for sure though," Lukashenko shot back with a deadpan face.

He said he had caught the fish in the Pripyat River, which runs through the so-called exclusion zone in Belarus and Ukraine, a cordoned off site contaminated in the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear power plant explosion.

Lukashenko, who said fishing reminds him of childhood, said that until recently, there were no fish in the Pripyat River.

"Things have been set in order there. Now if you dip your finger in [the water], a fish will grab it," the president said.

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