

Environmentalists Punch Air Holes in Ice to Save Fish

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Environmentalists have drilled more than 25,000 holes by hand in ice covering bodies of water in the country's southern Astrakhan region to save suffocating fish, officials said Tuesday.

The thick ice has led to a fish die-off from a lack of oxygen dissolved in the water, the Volga-Caspian department of the Federal Fisheries Agency said in a statement.

"Specialists drill 10 to 12 holes per hectare using ice augers. Then they put reeds into the holes, which allow the fish to breathe and prevent the holes from freezing over," the statement said.

A group of Greenpeace activists left Moscow last week to fight forest fires in the region, which features extensive marshland at the mouth of the Volga River where it empties into the Caspian Sea.

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