

Drift Netting Ban Supported

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Conservationists welcomed a call by Audit Chamber chief Sergei Stepashin to ban drift net fishing in Russian waters.

"I am prepared to raise this problem with Deputy Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov, and if necessary with [President] Dmitry Medvedev," Stepashin said during a meeting with Kamchatka region officials on Tuesday, the WWF said in a statement Wednesday.

Kamchatka Governor Vladimir Ulyukin has said tens of thousands of tons of low-value commercial fish are thrown overboard every year after being caught in drift nets, meaning that local fish processing plants lose a significant portion of the catch.

The WWF estimates damage caused by Russian and Japanese drift netting at 426 million rubles (\$15.2 million) in 2008.