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As Putin Fishes, Russia's Total Catch Increases

By The Moscow Times

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President Vladimir Putin isn't the only Russian heading outdoors with a fishing pole in hand.

The Federal Fisheries Agency is reporting that the total catch of commercial fisherman has increased by 2.4 percent this year compared to the same period in 2012.

That amounts to a total of 2.38 million tons of pollock, cod, herring and other fish, an increase of 57,100 tons from last year, the agency said this week.

Fishermen made larger hauls in the Far East, which traditionally accounts for the the largest yield, as well as the Caspian Basin and the Far North, while the figures slipped for the Black and Baltic seas.

The fisheries agency provided a breakdown for the fish caught in different areas, including pollock in the Far East (1.13 million tons, down 4,700 tons from last year), cod in the Far North

(264,800 tons) and herring in the Baltic Sea (7,100 tons).

But pike, the fish that Putin proudly posed with during a Siberian fishing trip earlier this month, didn't make the top of the list.

Putin came under fire this week after the Kremlin released a slew of photos showing him on a fishing trip with Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev during a visit to the republics of Tyva and Khakasia. State television showed Putin catching what the Kremlin described as a 21-kilogram pike and kissing it.

Speculation immediately erupted in the Russian blogosphere about whether the Kremlin press office had recycled photos from a fishing trip that took place in 2007 and whether the pike really weighed 21 kilograms.

Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, has denied the speculation.

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