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Russians Drank 10M Liters of Counterfeit Whiskey in 2013

By The Moscow Times

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Russian retailers sold 9.9 million liters of whiskey more than the country imported in 2013, according to official statistics that indicate a lucrative market in counterfeit alcohol.

The State Statistics Service figures were reported Friday by business news agency RBC.

The counterfeit whiskey market may be worth at least 8 billion rubles ($230 million), given Russian alcohol prices, the agency said.

In 2012, retail sales of whiskey exceeded imports by 7.8 million liters.

In 2010, the first year in which data on the discrepancy in the amount between retailed and imported whiskey began to be collated, the excess of the spirit sold amounted to 16.8 million liters.

The Russian segment of the Internet hosts numerous sites offering replicas of elite alcohol

brands with prices starting at 100 rubles ($2.90) per bottle.

The Federal Alcohol Market Regulatory Service unsuccessfully campaigned last year for the right to block websites offering counterfeit alcohol without a court order.

Whiskey is the most popular beverage with counterfeiters, with rum and tequila also in the top three, a spokesman for the state watchdog said, RBC reported.

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