

Belarus Helps Norway's Fish Farmers Skirt Russia's Food Import Ban

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Norwegian fish is finding a way to Russia despite Moscow's import ban.

Norway's fish producers, heavily hit by Russia's ban on food imports from countries that have sanctioned it over Ukraine, have found a way around the embargo by sending goods through Belarus.

By going through Russia's ex-Soviet neighbor, exporters have almost restored exports volumes to previous levels, Russian business daily Vedomosti reported Thursday, citing figures published by Norwegian newspaper Dagens Naeringsliv.

Russia banned imports of Norwegian fish at the start of August, causing exports of salmon to plummet 82 percent.

But enterprising logistics appear to be working overdrive: In the first week of September, supplies of fresh salmon from Norway to Belarus soared threefold, the paper said.

"We thought we would be faced with difficulties, but the market has redistributed the salmon beautifully," a representative of a large Norwegian fish producer Coast Seafood told Dagens Naeringsliv.

Salmon — shipped and then processed in Belarus and other border countries — resumed its flow into Russia, allowing Norwegian producers to nearly recoup the export decline, the representative said.

Following the ban, Belarussian President Alexander Lukashenko said he respected Russia's decision and would stop banned products from entering Russia, with which Belarus is joined in a Customs Union.

Meanwhile, Russian fish producers in the Far East have said their refrigerators are filled with salmon they cannot ship to Russia's central regions. They blamed the fiasco on high transportation costs and sanitary authorities that take too long to issue permits — something Norwegian producers have no problems with, they said.

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