

Rescue Mission for 'Fishermen in Distress' Finds Seals Instead

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A rescue crew that was dispatched Wednesday to save a group of fishermen lost at sea was bewildered to find a large gathering of seals where the distressed humans were meant to be, Russian media reported.

The Primorye region branch of Russia's Emergency Situations Ministry was informed Wednesday afternoon that a portion of an ice field had become detached from the coast northeast of Vladivostok, and that it had been seen with some 15 silhouettes on board, drifting into the distance.

A helicopter was sent to their rescue, but upon arrival, it found itself hovering not over a group of panicked fishermen, but over a pack of marine mammals basking on the ice.

An Emergency Situations Ministry spokesperson moved to dispel concerns that fishermen may have initially been on the ice drift before disappearing.

"If people had drowned, we would have found evidence of human presence on the surface of the water — gear or boxes," news agency RIA Novosti quoted the spokesperson as saying.

"There was nothing there."

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