The Moscow Times
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Half-Ton of 'Coffin Caviar' Destroyed in Russia

By The Moscow Times

November 13, 2015



Caviar production in Russia is strictly regulated.

The half-ton of black caviar that was discovered by police stashed in a speeding hearse last month in Russia's Far East has been destroyed, the Interior Ministry said Friday.

The prized foodstuff was disposed of at a landfill site near the city of Khabarovsk, Interior Ministry spokeswoman Yelena Alexeyeva said, the TASS news agency reported.

The massive haul of caviar, which is harvested from the endangered sturgeon fish, was found inside a hearse last month when police stopped it for speeding in the Khabarovsk region near the Chinese border. The hearse's driver and his partner claimed they knew nothing about their cargo, which included caviar hidden in a casket and in plastic bags tucked among several wreaths. There was no body in the casket.

The two men inside the hearse at the time are facing criminal charges, TASS reported.

Caviar production in Russia is strictly regulated. The catching of sturgeon in the Amur River, which marks much of the Chinese-Russian border, has been banned since 1958.

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