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Oyster Farming Booms After Russia's Import Ban

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Domestic seafood production has seen an unprecedented boom in the last few years, with a boost in the oyster and mussel harvest coming from the annexed Crimean peninsula.

The Kremlin imposed an embargo on Western food imports, including oysters, in response to U.S. sanctions on Russia in the wake of its seizure of Crimea in 2014. Until 2014, Russia did not commercially produce oysters and mussels. The production of cheese, fish and other products has adjusted to the import ban with varying degrees of success.

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The Russian oyster harvest increased by 265 times in the past three years, the RBC business portal cited the Federal Agency for Fishery saying Wednesday. Around 2 metric tons of oysters were domestically made in 2014; the number shot up to 531 metric tons by 2017.

Mussels farmers also ramped up their harvest from 100 to 1,165 metric tons in three years, a nearly 12-fold increase, RBC said.

The annexed Crimean peninsula was the top oyster and mussel farming region, followed by the Pacific region of Primorye, the Black Sea region of Krasnodar and the northwestern Republic of Karelia, according to the Federal Agency for Fishery.

The agency credited new legislation that expanded the distribution of fish farming sites, in addition to the Kremlin's import ban on Western-raised seafood, with the three-year surge in harvesting the seafood delicacy.

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