

# Russia to release 100 illegally captured whales

June 20 2019

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Workers move a whale by a crane in Srednyaya Bay, out of Vladivostok, Russia, Thursday, June 20, 2019. Russian officials have launched an operation to release nearly 100 illegally captured whales whose confinement in Russia's far east has become a rallying cry for environmentalists. (AP Photo/Alyona Stepanova)

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illegally captured whales whose confinement in Russia's far east has become a rallying cry for environmentalists.

A state TV reporter made the announcement during President Vladimir Putin's live Q&A show on Thursday, saying that by "coincidence" the operation began just before the start of the show.

Deputy Prime Minister Alexei Gordeyev said during the show that the operation to fully re-introduce the mammals back into the wild would take at least four months.

The condition of [whales](#) kept in cramped conditions in Russia's far east has drawn international concern, and Putin personally ordered authorities to investigate the case and release the animals.

Russian prosecutors have brought [criminal charges](#) against four companies keeping the whales.



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Russian President Vladimir Putin gestures while speaking during his annual call-in show in Moscow, Russia, Thursday, June 20, 2019. Putin hosts call-in shows every year, which typically provide a platform for ordinary Russians to appeal to the president on issues ranging from foreign policy to housing and utilities. (Alexei Nikolsky, Sputnik, Kremlin Pool Photo via AP)

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Citation: Russia to release 100 illegally captured whales (2019, June 20) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2019-06-russia-illegally-captured-whales.html>

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