

## Russia to free Japanese boat and crew

*by UPI*

MOSCOW -- Russia announced Friday that it will free all 17 crewmen of a Japanese fishing boat that was seized off the Commodore Islands last June for poaching. The Itar-Tass news agency said even the boat's captain, Takashashi Seiji, who was the subject of a criminal investigation, would be allowed to leave provided the owner of the fishing boat posts bail. The move does not mean that the captain is off the hook. Russian officials said Seiji faces further legal proceedings under the Russian Criminal Code and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The Japanese fishing boat Hoshin Maru was licensed to fish salmon in Russian waters under a Russian-Japanese intergovernmental agreement. The Russians say they seized the boat after they found it contained valuable red salmon and not the chum salmon the accord permitted.

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