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## **In Primorsky Territory, probe launched into illegal harvesting of biological resources**



The Primorsky Regional Directorate of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation has opened an investigation upon illegal catching of biological resources, into an offence under Part 3 of Article 256 (illegal catching of aquatic biological resources) of the Criminal Code of Russia.

According to the investigation, several corporate entities had been provided with a permit to catch orca and beluga whales for cultural and educational purposes. From July to September 2018, under the issued permits 12 orcas and 90 belugas had been caught. However, it was established that the 11 orcas had not reached the age of puberty and had been calves of a transitional subspecies included in the Red List of Threatened Species of Kamchatka Territory. It was also established that the 90 beluga whales had not reached the age of puberty, while 13 of them had been under 1 year old.

In the meantime, the law of the Russian Federation prohibits catching groups of whales featuring

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young-of-the-year calves together with their mothers, as well as females with evident signs of pregnancy.

At the moment, the investigation continues; investigative activities are being carried out to establish all the circumstances of the offence.

It should be noted that Acting Governor Oleg Kozhemyako addressed law enforcement authorities of the region to ask for solution to the situation.

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