

Drop in Water Levels on Northern Rivers

A critical situation has developed on the Russian northern rivers Vychegda, Mezen and Severnaya Dvina. A continuing drop in water level has seriously complicated navigation on principal transport routes of the Northern Basin.

While the guaranteed depth for ship movement in shallows of the Dvina channel is 170 centimeters, depth is now no more than 145 centimeters. Regulations in effect for the river fleet give river workers the right to halt navigation temporarily. But according to A. Merkushev, head of the Transport and Movement Service of the Northern River Steamship Line, work on the rivers is continuing. Steps are being taken to assist shipping. Light tugboats have been sent to the shallow headwaters of the rivers and deep-draught ships have been relocated to areas near river mouths. Barge loads and the draught of log rafts have been reduced. Dredgers are helping to maintain the depth of fairways in the rapids.

The hydrologists' forecasts are not encouraging. According to the specialists, levels in the rivers of the Oblast this summer will be at their lowest since records began to be kept.

Vodnyi transport

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