

CMFRI harvests Asian Sea Bass



Fishermen with a good harvest of Sea Bass at the “Harvest Mela” that was held at Chemmanchery on Tuesday.

CHENNAI: Evolving an alternate livelihood for fishing communities in the State, the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) on Tuesday successfully harvested Asian Sea Bass, an edible fish commonly consumed in the State through a sea cage farming near Kovalam.

Speaking to reporters at the ‘harvest mela,’ G Syda Rao, director of CMFRI, said: “After successful demonstration of open sea cage culture of lobsters at Isukapalli in Andhra and Vairavankuppam in Pulicat during 2009, we have reaped a good harvest of Asian Sea Bass through open sea cage farming, which was launched in February this year at Kovalam.”

The experimental cage with six-metre diameter and six-metre depth was launched in February at Chemmenchery Kuppam near Kovalam and after six months’ time, CMFRI officials were able to get an harvest of more than two tons of fully-grown Asian Sea Bass which has a good market value. The cage farming would become a better rehabilitation option for fishermen during the fishing ban periods, Rao said.

For setting up a cage for sea farming, the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) gives 60 per cent subsidy and the respective states entrusted with the task to identifying beneficiaries. Besides, CMFRI remains a scientific advisor to fishermen who avail of cage farming.

State Fisheries Minister K P P Samy along with other officials from Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture, Zoological Survey of India and Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) witnessed the harvest and patted the institute for showing new livelihood options for fishermen.

Samy said, “Since cage culture seems to be a good scheme aimed at improving the livelihoods of fishermen, I will present the details to Chief Minister M Karunanidhi and a positive outcome on introducing state-sponsored open sea cage farming is expected soon.”