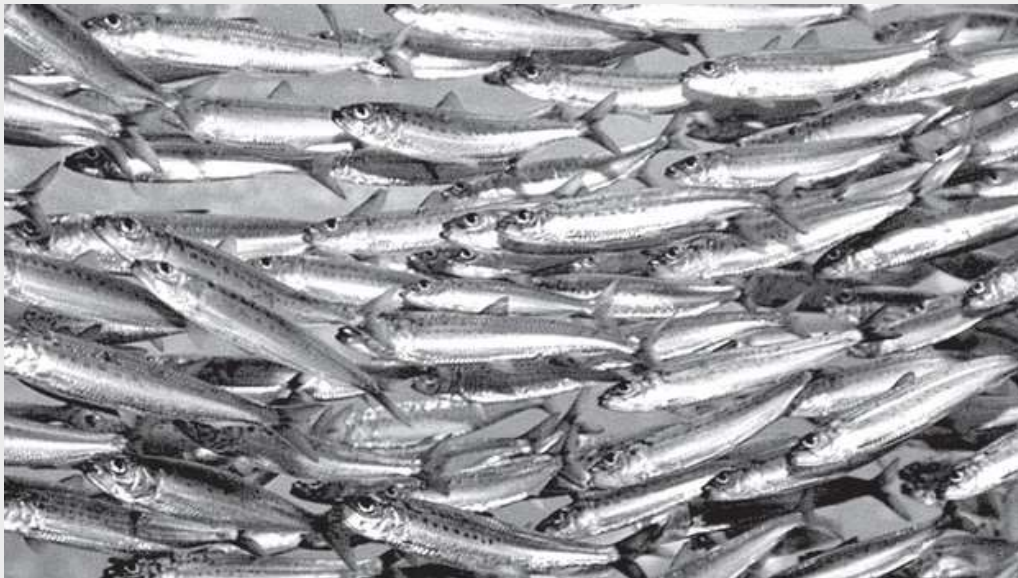


Dwindling Fish Catch Sets Off Alarm Bells

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KOCHI: With the catch of oil sardines falling sharply by 51 per cent, the overall marine fish landings recorded an annual decline of 5.3 per cent. The shocking revelations were made by the CMFRI which released its statistics on Saturday. According to the data, there was total fish landings of 3.4 million tonnes last year, which was lower by 1.89 lakh tonnes compared to 3.59 lakh tonnes recorded in 2014.

Oil sardine landings recorded a sharp fall of 2.79 lakh tonnes (51 per cent) mainly along the south west coast of the country comprising Kerala, Karnataka and Goa. The contribution of oil sardines towards overall fish landings decreased to 8 per cent 2015 from 8 per cent in the previous year, causing a sharp decline in overall fish landings," said CMFRI director Dr A Gopalakrishnan while releasing the CMFRI marine Fish Landings Data 2015.

The data also revealed a sharp fall in landings of other fish species: lesser sardine (2.56 lakh tonnes drop); Indian mackerel (2.38 lakh tonnes) penaeid prawns (1.99 lakh tonnes); ribbon fish (1.77 lakh tonnes); threadfin breams (1.63 lakh tonnes); croakers (1.55 lakh tonnes) non-panaeid prawns (1.49 lakh tonnes); scads (1.12 lakh tonnes); and Bombay duck (1.10 lakh tonnes).

According to the CMFRI, Gujarat ranked first in fish landings last year, with 7.21 lakh tonnes (21.2 per cent of the total), followed by Tamil Nadu with 7.09 lakh tonnes (20.8 per cent) and Kerala with 4.82 lakh tonnes (14.2 per cent).

Though the landing centres recorded a sharp fall in catch, fish prices increased by 26 per cent. The total value of fish based on the price at the landing centres was Rs 40,100 crore in 2015, recording a 26.3 per cent increase over the previous year. At the retail level, a 24.3 per cent rise in fish prices lifted the total value to Rs 65,180 crore. The unit price per kg of fish at landing centres rose by 32.8 per cent annually, while the retail price advanced by 30.8 per cent.

Kerala recorded the biggest annual price growth both at the landing centres and at the retail level-36.4 per cent and 33.5 per cent respectively.

Alarming Figures

While marine fish landings across the country recorded a 5.3 per cent fall last year, Kerala witnessed an alarming decline of 16 per cent. As per records, the sharp fall was caused by 55 per cent decrease in oil sardine landings. However, at 14.2 per cent, the state's share of catch continues to be the third largest in the country. In Kerala, overall fish landings dropped to 4.82 lakh tonnes in 2015 from 5.76 lakh tonne in 2014.