

Shortage of sardines costs Kerala Rs 150 cr in 2015: Report

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The fisheries sector in Kerala has suffered a loss of Rs 150 crore in 2015 due to sharp fall in the availability of oil sardines, according to a study by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI).

The CMFRI submitted the report to Minister for Fisheries, J. Mercykutty Amma, on Thursday at a consultative meeting of the research and academic institutes in fisheries sector convened by the minister held at the CMFRI here.

The sardine shortage in the last year resulted in 28.2 per cent loss in employment in the sector and 45.8 per cent in wage share.

Average price increase for the sardine consumers in the state went up from Rs 26 to Rs 65, said the report.

The report points that after 2012, there has been serious disruption in the timing of breeding time and strength of environmental events like upwelling in the Arabian Sea.

Besides, 2015 was a strong El Nino year with reduced rainfall and increased sea surface temperature.

These coupled with excessive fishing on the stock beyond the maximum sustainable yield and excessive capture of juveniles during 2010-12 has led to a shortage in the oil sardine stock in the Arabian Sea off Kerala, says the report.

The study team, led by V. Kripa, head of Fishery Environment and Management Division of the CMFRI, indicated that the chances of a full recovery in the sardine catch this year is remote.

"This year the conditions of the fish and upwelling are also good. But a depleted fish stock requires time for rebuilding its population," said Kripa.

The CMFRI has proposed to the state government to introduce effective precautionary measures, including strengthening the curbs on fishing juvenile fishes and bringing in regulation on reducing the length and depth of fishing net.

The Fisheries Minister said there should be a "constant mechanism" for effectively disseminating the technologies being developed by the research institutes to the stakeholders.

"A committee of experts representing from all the research institutes in fisheries functioning in the state will be formed for monitoring the mechanism of disseminating the technology to the targeted groups," she said.

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