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New species of mackerel identified off Kerala coast

KOCHI: Scientists of the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) have identified a new species of mackerel in Kerala waters. The black-spotted new fish, identified by a team led by principal scientist E M Abdussamad, is named Indian chub mackerel (*Scomber indicus*).



It was found in the study that the new species is distinctly different from other members of the mackerel family both taxonomically and genetically. In local parlance, the fish is known as pulli ayala or pulli thiriyana.

“While a catch of 10 tonnes of the Indian chub mackerel was recorded in the state in 2015, around 25 tonnes of the species was caught this year showing the growth of the fish in the state,” said CMFRI director A Gopalakrishnan.

Indian chub mackerel was first found in the Gujarat coast in 2015, later it appeared in other areas of the west coast of India up to Kanyakumari.

This year the species was reported only in Kerala.

“The fish is caught mainly by ring seines and trawls and small quantities by hooks and lines operated around knolls,” said E M Abdussamad.

“The fish is being landed in Kochi, Vizhinjam, Alappuzha, Kollam and Kozhikode,” he said.

“The catch was constituted mainly by immature fish of 9-21 cm this year.

“The fish is being monitored continuously to understand their biology and interaction with other species. Detailed study indicates that they spawned during April-May along the Kerala coast,” he said.