

# Kerala to be a net deficit State in fish availability

## Study points to need to boost production

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Given the widening gap between demand and supply, Kerala will be a net deficit State in terms of fish availability and needs to rely on arrivals or imports for domestic supply.

For daily consumption, about 2,000-2,500 tonnes of fish is required, but domestic supply caters to only 60 per cent of that. The remaining has to be sourced from other States or imported from abroad.

The demand-supply gap will widen every year, and to meet its demand by 2035, Kerala will require 50 per cent of fish from other States, reveals a study on fish trade by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute.

Despite the soaring demand, fish prices in the State fell last year.

Karnataka tops the list of States from where fish comes to Kerala: it contributes 153 tonnes (22 per cent), followed by Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, according to the study, carried out by Shyam S Salim, Principal Scientist, and his team at the Socio Economic Evaluation and Technology Transfer Division.

Fish prices fell 15 to 20 per cent last year.

The study assumes significance in the context of the fact that fish price rose 35 per cent in 2015 as compared to 2014.

The price of mackerel, however, fell 30.6 per cent.

Even species such as sardine, mackerel, anchovies, barracuda and threadfin breams,

### Quantity of major fish arrivals from other States

Species	Quantity (kg)	% to total
Sardine	255,921	37.48
Mackerel	103,134	15.11
Tuna	98,865	14.48
Seer fish	91,140	13.35
Other perches	26,378	3.86
Pomfrets	23,250	3.41
Anchovy	18,400	2.69
Scads	10,755	1.58
Threadfin breams	8,900	1.30
Sail fish	8,350	1.22
Fresh water fishes	7,200	1.05
Rohu	7,001	1.03
Carangid	6,500	0.95
Cutla	6,046	0.89
Others	10,933	1.60
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,82,772</b>	<b>100.00</b>

which are preferred by consumers in the State, saw their prices fall 20.7 per cent. Among the different varieties of fish, sardine accounts for nearly 256 tonnes, or about 37.4 per cent, of total arrivals.

To meet the growing demand and to narrow the demand-supply gap, the study suggests that the government should intervene to increase fish production by boosting inland aquaculture and mariculture activities like cage fish farming.

The study also suggested fixing minimum support prices for fish to support fishermen in terms of surplus landings to prevent sales at throwaway prices and a maximum price to help consumers when prices shoot up.

"A minimum support price and a maximum ceiling price will act as stabilising measures in ensuring better distribution across the value chain", the study said.