

Marine fish catch up 6.6% in 2016, Gujarat maintains top position for 4th year

India's total marine fish catch has recorded a slight increase of 6.6 per cent in 2016, with Gujarat remaining at the top position for the fourth consecutive year.

The total marine fish landings was 3.63 million tonnes and the value of marine fish landings at the landing centre level was estimated at ₹48,381 crore, registering an increase of 20.67 per cent. At the retail level, the value was ₹73,289 crore, an increase of 12.44 per cent, data released by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute said.

However, the sardine catch has continued to show a declining trend since 2013. For the first time after 1998, sardine was not the top-ranked species in terms of the catch in the country. Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and Daman & Diu also witnessed a surge in fish landings.

According to A Gopalakrishnan, CMFRI Director, the marine capture fisheries is experiencing more fishing pressure and there is an urgent need to implement control measures to maintain the harvest at sustainable levels. "We have to explore the utilisation of untapped and unconventional resources to meet the demand," he said.

Attributing climate change, particularly the increase in sea surface temperature and mean sea level rise as factors affecting marine fisheries, he said CMFRI is carrying out research works for developing frameworks to mitigate such challenges.

Even as mackerel recorded a sharp decline in Kerala, the national fish was placed in the first spot of the major resources obtained all over the country, after a long interval from 1999, with an overall production of 2.5 lakh tonnes ahead of sardine (2.44 lakh tonnes).

Kerala, one of the major fish consuming states, slipped to fourth spot for the first time, behind Karnataka.

Though the state was pushed to fourth position, Kerala registered an 8 per cent increase in its total marine fish catch, producing 5.23 lakh tonnes behind Gujarat (7.74 lakhs tonnes), Tamil Nadu (7.07 lakh tonnes) and Karnataka (5.29 lakh tonnes).

A huge hike in the production of Hilsa shad, the favourite fish of the Bengalis, helped West Bengal increase its marine fish production to 2.72 lakh tonnes. At the same time, the fish catch dropped significantly in Andhra Pradesh and Odisha due mainly to the cyclone, which reduced fishing days in these states.