



CMFRI STUDY

## Marine fish landing: Kerala slips to fourth spot



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DESPITE an eight per cent increase in fish landing, Kerala was pushed to the fourth position for the first time in the annual estimates on fish landing prepared by the Kochi-based Central Marine Fisheries Institute (CMFRI). India's marine fish catch registered a slight increase of 6.6 per cent during 2016 compared to the previous year. While Gujarat retained the first position, Kerala slipped a spot from the previous estimate. Karnataka and TN are second and third respectively.

According to CMFRI estimates, the total marine fish landings in 2016 is 3.63 million tonnes. West Bengal, Karnataka, Gujarat, Kerala, Maharashtra and Daman and Diu witnessed a hike while other states registered a fall in varying degrees.

Even as mackerel recorded a sharp decline in the state, it stood first across the country after a 13-year gap. The overall production was 2.5 lakh tonnes, ahead of sardine (2.44 lakh tonnes). Though there is a slight increase in the overall landing, the catch of sardine continues to show a declining trend since 2013.

A huge difference of 32.8 per cent was recorded in the landing of sardine, the most popular fish. At a mere 0.46 lakh tonnes in 2016, it is the lowest catch of sardine over the past two decades. It is also the first time the catch of sardine is slipping down to the third spot behind scads and mackerel. In 2012, the catch of sardine in Kerala was 3.9 lakh tonnes, with its availability decreasing each year.

Indicating the crisis in the fisheries sector of the state, the catch of mackerel also dropped by 33 per cent compared to 2015. Mackerel recorded 0.47 lakh tonnes this time. The scads (*Decapterus*), belonging to the carangids category, was placed first, registering a catch of 0.54 lakh tonnes.

A significant change noticed in 2016 was the landing pattern of bulls-eye (*Priacanthus* spp). From a mere 4,691 tonnes in 2015, the catch rose to 1.3 lakh tonnes. It was also found that chub mackerel (*Pullu Aylla*), a new species identified last year, was limited to the Kerala coast.