

### **Slight increase in marine fish landings**

Kochi, May 19 The marine fish landings in India, which had dropped to 5.3 per cent in 2015 from a year earlier, has recorded a slight increase of 6.6 per cent during 2016.

While oil sardines, the mainstay of the catches in most of the maritime states in the country recorded the sharpest drop, Hilsa Shad, the favourite fish in West Bengal, recovered from its previous trends of dwindling landings to reach 94,000 tonnes-- four fold increase compared to last year, says the estimates of country's marine fish landings of 2016.

The estimates released by the Kochi headquartered Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) today highlighted that for the first time after 1998, sardine was not the top ranked species in terms of the catch in the country.

The oil sardine landings which had fallen to 2.66 lakh tonnes in 2015 from 5.45 lakh tonnes in the previous year, declined further in the year 2016 to 244992 tonnes. The total marine fish landings for the year 2016 is 3.63 million tonnes, with Gujarat remaining at the top position for the fourth consecutive year producing the maximum landings in the country followed by Tamil Nadu. It was 3.40 million tonnes last year. West Bengal, Karnataka, Gujarat, Kerala, Maharashtra and Daman and Diu witnessed a hike in the marine fish landings, whereas other states registered a fall in the catch in varying degrees.

Indian mackerel have been placed in the top spot of the major resources obtained from Indian waters in 2016 with an estimate of 2.5 lakh tonnes. For the first time since 1999, oil sardine was not ranked the top species in terms of catch as it fell below Indian mackerel, says the CMFRI's estimates.

It says a huge hike in the production of Hilsa shad, the most favourite fish of Bengalis, helped the West Bengal increase its marine fish production to 2.72 lakh tonnes. The CMFRI authorities hailed the effective Hilsa management efforts taken by the governments of West Bengal and Bangladesh in boosting its production. CMFRI Director Dr A Gopalakrishnan said the estimate of value of marine fish landings during 2016 at the landing centre level was Rs 48,381 crore, registering an increase of 20.67 per cent compared to 2015. At the retail level, the estimated value was Rs 73,289 crore with an increase of 12.44 per cent over the previous year.

Even as mackerel recorded a sharp decline in Kerala, the national fish was placed 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 in the country, was slipped down to fourth spot for the first time in the history, behind Karnataka. India's west coast contributed a major share of 64 per cent to the total landings. The northwest region comprising of Gujarat, Maharashtra and the UT of Daman & Diu have the maximum quantity with 11.8 lakh tonnes of landings (33 per cent). The south-west region (Kerala, Karnataka and Goa) follows the northwest with 11.1 lakh tonnes (31 per cent).

Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Puducherry form the south-east region and West Bengal and Odisha form the north-east region and their contributions are 9.4 lakh tonnes (26 per cent) and 4.0 lakh tonnes (10 per cent) respectively.