

# Marine Fish Landings Rise by 5.6%

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**Kochi:** Indian marine fish landings have recorded a 5.6% increase in 2017 from a year ago, helped by a rebound in oil sardine.

Among commercially-important fishes, mackerel and prawns have recorded an increase, while the catches of hilsa and tuna have declined, as per a survey conducted by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI). The total fish landings in the country reached 3.83 million tonnes (mt) with Gujarat retaining the top position for the fifth consecutive year, accounting for 20.5% share of the landings, followed by Tamil Nadu and Kerala. This the highest catch after record landings in 2012.

"Awareness on sustainable fishing, implementation of minimum legal size of fishes for catching in states like Kerala and decreasing effect of El Nino could be the reasons for the higher landings," said A Gopalakrishnan, CMFRI director.

Revival of oil sardine in the western coastal states, especially in Kerala, after several years of decline played a major role in improving the country's fish production. However, the east coast saw a slump in the oil sardine

catch with 83% drop in Andhra Pradesh and 36% in Tamil Nadu from 2016. Though Tamil Nadu is in the second place in fish catch, its total landings showed a dip along with that of Puducherry and Daman & Diu.

Sardine topped the list of marine fishery resources with 3.37 lakh tonnes, recording an increase of 38% in the country. Mackerel, ribbon fishes, lesser sardines and prawns also showed a rise. Commercially-important penaeid prawns, that have been showing a drop of late, increased by 5.5% to 2.08 lakh tonnes in what could be good news for the seafood industry. Mackerel landings in Kerala and Hilsa landings in West Bengal declined this year. Hilsa catches had increased significantly in the previous year due to over fishing. Now, it is at a sustainable level, according to T V Sathianandan, head of fishery resources assessment division of CMFRI.

Cyclone Ockhi that hit the country in December 2017 had a devastating effect on the fishery sectors of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. "Kerala suffered an estimated drop of 35,000 tonnes of fish at an estimated loss of ₹821 crore at the retail level," Gopalakrishnan said.

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