

Caution against unchecked exploitation of marine life

'Heat stress caused by global warming a major threat to fishes'

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Unchecked exploitation of marine life and human-influenced habitat degradation and climate change are the greatest threats to marine fishes, Kim Friedman, Senior Fishery Research Officer, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the UN, said here on Thursday.

Heat stress caused by global warming is a bigger threat to fishes than dumping of plastics and other contaminants into oceans. Unlike in the developing world,



FAO Fishery Research Officer
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the developed world, where fishing is more of a business than a component of food security, has rebuilt its fisheries stock to the 1950's level. This was made possible because it is an organised sector there, he said.

The decline in the global percentage of sustainability-

exploited fish stocks calls for enhanced efforts to rebuild fish stocks. This is both a biological and ethical imperative since long-term resilience of ecosystem functions is a prerequisite to ensuring sustainable development of the world, Mr. Friedman said.

He was speaking on the sidelines of a four-day global expert meet on shark and rays fishery, at the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) here on Thursday.

The meet will formulate common guidelines for all countries to improve data collection methodology and to map value chain to promote sustainable fishing and trade.

"Local extinctions [extir-

pations] have been linked mostly to fisheries and effects of climate change. No fully marine fish species has demonstrably gone extinct due to fishing in the last few millennia.

"It is argued that the available data likely underestimates the real situation of biodiversity loss in the oceans as the understanding of the taxonomy of marine species is relatively poor, and extinctions are difficult to prove. However, the increasing human impact on the oceans today is now more widespread," he observed.

Sharks, rays vulnerable
Some fish species like sharks and rays are especially vulnerable due to lower produc-

tivity levels and they getting trapped in nets as bycatch. There is a general agreement that as fishing increases and a greater number of stocks are over-exploited, especially across developing States, fishing and trade controls will undoubtedly need to be strengthened to counter recognised shortfalls in the management of marine fish-stock exploitation, Mr. Friedman said.

Responding to such concerns for over the last half century, fisheries governance has pivoted away from a focus on development to one on sustainable management and conservation. Today, much emphasis is laid on fish-stock rebuilding where depletions have occurred, he added.