

Fish landing falls, but State fares better

Total fish production falls by 9% countrywide; trend attributed to El Nino phenomenon

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Oil sardine catch has declined sharply with a 54% fall in landings across the country. The popular fish variety fell to the 9th position in 2018. It had the top position in 2017. From the 2017 landings of 3.37 lakh tonnes, the figure came down to 1.55 lakh tonnes in 2018.

The total marine fish production too fell by 9% in 2018, recording 3.49 million tonnes compared to 3.83 million tonnes in 2017, a drop of 3.47 lakh tonnes. The data collated by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) were released here on Friday.

Addressing the media, CMFRI Director A. Gopalakrishnan said the El Nino phenomenon had an impact on Indian waters. During the period in question, ocean surface temperatures shot up by two to three degrees, impacting fish breeding. Besides, the number of fishing days came down in several States thanks to cyclones and heavy rain.

According to CMFRI officials, fishers were not inclined to venture into the sea owing to the fall in fish catch and rising fuel prices. The details of a study conducted in this regard were presented by T.V. Sathianandan, principal scientist, Fisheries Resource Management Division, CMFRI.

The data also revealed that Indian mackerel with a total landing of 2.84 lakh tonnes was the toast of the marine basket. Squid, cuttlefish, and octopus, categorised as cephalopods, formed

In troubled waters

Top 5 species in India (in tonnes)

Indian mackerel - 2.84 lakh
Squid, cuttlefish etc. - 2.21 lakh
Non-peneaid Prawn - 1.94 lakh
Ribbon fish - 1.94 lakh
Panaeid prawn - 1.84 lakh

Top 5 species in Kerala (in tonnes)

Indian mackerel - 80,568
Oil sardine - 77,093
Anchovies - 58,766
Panaeid prawn - 50,472
Squid - 50,180

- ▶ **Most abundant**
-Indian mackerel - 80,568 tonnes
- ▶ **Trawlers harvest most portion of landings**
2.8 lakh tonnes
- ▶ **Most productive period - July to Sept.**
2 lakh tonnes (33%)
- ▶ **District with maximum landings**
Ernakulam (25%)
- ▶ **Overall landings - 6,42,580 tonnes**
Increase - 10%
- ▶ **Deep decline recorded - Oil sardine**
Landing - 77,093 tonnes
Fall - 39%

District-wise landings

Ernakulam - 1,61,082
Kollam - 1,38,475
Kozhikode - 97,508
Malappuram - 74,400
Thrissur - 61,158
Thiruvananthapuram - 57,030
Alappuzha - 31,036
Kasaragod - 12,573
Kannur - 9,318



the second largest variety with a catch of 2.21 lakh tonnes.

The drop in oil sardine catch in Kerala was 39%. It fell to 77,093 tonnes from 1.27 lakh tonnes in 2017. However, even as the total fish landings in the country dropped, the State registered a 10% increase with 6.42 lakh tonnes in total landings compared to the previous year, with all major resources, except oil sardines, recording an increased catch. The State also upheld its position from fourth to third.

The decrease in overall fish landings was mainly attributed to the low catch in

West Bengal, Karnataka, and Maharashtra with a drop of 2.01 lakh tonnes, 0.95 lakh tonnes, and 0.86 lakh tonnes respectively. Among the nine maritime States, Gujarat was in the first position with 7.80 lakh tonnes, followed by Tamil Nadu (7.02 lakh tonnes) and Kerala (6.43 lakh tonnes).

Indian mackerel was the most abundant resource in Kerala (80,568 tonnes) with a significant increase of 142% compared to the previous year. Ernakulam district contributed the most (25%) to State landings.

Munambam with 86,710 tonnes remained the top fishing harbour.

Even as fish landings dropped, the value was slightly higher in comparison with the previous year.

The estimated value of marine fish landings based on prices at landing centres across the country during 2018 was ₹52,632 crore, with an increase of 0.4% compared to the previous year.

The average price per kg of fish at landing centre rate was ₹152 (11.1% increase). At the retail level, the estimated value of marine fish was ₹80,320 crore (2.4% increase), and the unit price at the retail market level was



₹232 crore

(13.4% increase).

Dr. K. Sunil Mohamed, principal scientist and head, Molluscan Fisheries Division, Dr. P.U. Zacharia, principal scientist and head, Demersal Fisheries Division, Dr. Prathibha Rohit, head of Pelagic Fisheries Division, and Dr. C. Ramachandran, principal scientist, were present at the media briefing.