

Forecasting model for sardine to be developed

Experts call for a collaborative research initiative

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A panel of experts, who met at the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) on Tuesday, said a forecasting model would be developed for long-term prediction on the availability of the Indian oil sardine on a regular basis.

A collaborative research initiative partnering different institutions was required to develop the forecasting model, they said at the end of a day-long national symposium on the near collapse in sardine fish catch in India. They considered various reasons for fluctuations in oil sardine availability in the southern Arabian sea.

The panel expressed the view that added fishing pressure during the period of



Net effect: Fluctuations in sardine availability are influenced by the El Nino phenomenon, spawning disruption, and high fishing pressure. ■ FILE PICTURE

scarcity would lead to further collapse of the resource.

Unfavourable conditions

A model for regular forecasting on the fluctuations of oil sardine need to be deve-

loped. The fluctuations of sardine are mainly influenced by unfavourable conditions due to El Nino, stunted growth, spawning disruption, migration from normal fishing grounds and

continued high fishing pressure. However, a collaborative research initiative was required to study the environmental impacts and climate change on pelagic fishery resources, the researchers said.

CMFRI Director A. Gopalakrishnan said the advisory given by the institute earlier

regarding the decline of sardine was a remarkable step in analysing the reasons behind the fluctuation of sardine.

"A regular forecasting model will be made possible with the cooperation of different research institutes working in climate change, oceanography and fishery biology."

Sardine genome

The CMFRI will also release a draft sequence of genome of sardine by the year-end. Even though the CMFRI has found that three types of sardines including Oman sardine have the same genetic structure, separate management strategies are required for the sardines.

Besides scientists from CMFRI, researchers from National Institute of Oceanography, Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services, Space Applications Centre of ISRO, Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology and Central Institute of Fisheries Technology presented their findings during the discussion.

Scientists mull limits on sardine fishing

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Scientists from various institutions who gathered here on Tuesday under the aegis of the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) to consider a near collapse in Indian oil sardine fisheries said they would have to make further studies before recommending whether temporary restrictions would be required to revive the stock.

At the end of a day-long

national symposium in which scientists from various disciplines participated, CMFRI director A. Gopalakrishnan told reporters that sardine catch across India had decline over 50% between 2017 and 2018.

Oil sardine is a commercially important species, pivotal to economic and food security in the State and the scientific community is worried about the sharp fall in landings.

The restrictions could in-

clude limiting the catch as well as present restrictions on juvenile fishing. However, a decision on the issue can be taken only after further studies on issues at hand, which include climate change, the effects of El Nino, fish migration and overfishing.

Scientists also expressed the opinion that with sardine catch decline, the minimum legal size for catching the fish could be raised from 10 cm to 15 cm.