

01 October 2019

Scientists concerned over fall in catch of sharks over years

OUR BUREAU

Kochi, September 30

Voicing concern over the dwindling catch of sharks, scientists at the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) have suggested self-imposed measures to conserve the threatened fish group.

Data of the last 20 years pointed to a sharp fall in the catch of elasmobranchs (sharks and rays), they said at a workshop on the conservation and trade of sharks, held by CMFRI.

"The lack of regulatory measures and overfishing may even lead to the extinction of some shark species. It is high time the stakeholders gave a thrust to conserve these species," said PU Zacharia, head of the Demersal Fisheries Division of the CMFRI.

"However, unlike some

other countries, India has a good model of shark fishing. No practice of fishing for the lone purpose of shark fins exists in the country. The meat and other parts of sharks except fins have huge demand within the country," he said, adding that the CMFRI has submitted a National Plan of Action on Sharks to the Centre.

Call for lifting the ban

During the discussion, shark traders asked for lifting the ban on the export of shark fins. The fishermen community and traders are suffering huge financial losses due to the ban, they said. Fins have huge demand in overseas markets, and neighbouring countries including Sri Lanka export them. India loses a good amount of foreign currency on this count, they said.