

# CMFRI's efforts to increase clam catch in Kerala's Vembanad lake yield results

Fishermen harvest 10 tonnes of the species per day from the lake

**V SAJEEV KUMAR**

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The Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute's (CMFRI) efforts to rejuvenate the black clam (*Vilorita cyprinoides*) resource in the Vembanad Lake has yielded results with fishermen starting to harvest good catch from the region. CMFRI's initiative of relaying baby clams in various sites in Vembanad facilitated increasing the clam, which, in turn, helped fishers harvest around 10 tonnes of clam per day from two areas of the lake.

Aimed at boosting the clam



The initiative is expected to help in increasing clam production to nearly 1,500 tonnes

fishery and enhancing livelihood options for the clam fishers in the region, the Molluscan Fisheries Division of CMFRI re-laid (stocked) baby clams after identifying suitable areas on the northern side of the Thanneermukkom Barrage.

As part of this initiative, which was under a project on "Rejuvenation of Clam" taken up by the Fish-

eries Department of Kerala using the District Panchayat Scheme, approximately 200 tonnes of baby black clams were re-laid in Keecheri and Chakkathukadu areas of the Vembanad Lake under the technical guidance of CMFRI. According to the CMFRI scientists, the initiative is expected to bring out a production of nearly 1,500 tonnes from these sites which is over seven times the number of re-laid baby clams.

The long undisturbed period of nearly two years has facilitated at least two spawnings followed by spat settlement leading to the establishment of a new black clam bed in the lake and thus enhancing the clam resource, said P Laxmilatha, Head of Molluscan Fisheries Division (MFD) of CMFRI. Relaying of baby clams led to the establishment of the resource

in these areas spreading around 20 hectares and helped fishers harvest adult clams with good growth rate, she said.

The production of black clams in Vembanad lake declined from a peak of 75,592 tonnes in 2006 to 42,036 tonnes in 2019. Low production owing to multiple reasons and the pandemic has had a cascading effect on clam fishers along Vembanad lake, Laxmilatha added.

## Sustaining livelihood

Reaping the benefits out of this, fishermen under the Keecheri Ulanadan Matsya Thozhilali Sahakarana Sangham collect the clams using canoes from re-laid locations and they sell clam meat for ₹150 per kg in the nearest market. Each canoe collects 450 kg of clams per day.