

‘Artificial reefs offer bright prospect for fisheries’

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ARTIFICIAL reefs will increase fish production and promote fishermen’s livelihood, marine scientists said. Participating in a brainstorming session held on the sidelines of the symposium on innovations in fishing technologies, marine scientists from the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) said the deployment of artificial reefs on the sea bed would enhance the growth of marine fauna and flora, and stimulate natural settings for fish production.

An artificial reef is a shelter placed on the sea bed as a substitute for natural habitats. Having a fixed scientific design, it functions as a self-sustaining production system on the sea bed.

According to a report presented by the CMFRI during the session, a total of 280 artificial reefs have been deployed in India’s coastal waters, including 243 in Tamil Nadu and 28 in Kerala.

“The artificial reefs would offer opportunities for a substantial increase in fish catch, especially for small-scale fishermen using hook and line. It will help save costs besides offering a lot

more environmental benefits such as enhancement of biodiversity, reduction of the carbon footprint of the fishing operation, reduction of wave energy and thereby coastal erosion, and stabilisation of islands”, the report said.

However, the CMFRI maintained that artificial reefs can be deployed only at designated sites after a competent authority carries out a study. The report was prepared and presented by director A Gopalakrishnan, and principal scientists V V R Suresh and Joe K Kizhakudan.



“Over 300 species coexist in a settled artificial reef habitat. The commercial varieties include breams, groupers, snappers, perches, cobia, sea bass, rabbit fishes, silver biddies, seer fish, barracuda, mackerel, trevalies, queen fishes, etc”, said Joe.

Union fisheries secretary Jatindra Nath Swain said the artificial reefs and sea ranching present a solution to the crisis prevalent in the sector.

Sufficient fish availability could be ensured in the near-shore waters with these technologies, he said.