

# Juvenile fishing still a challenge: CMFRI report

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Kochi:** Juvenile fishing practice continues to be a major challenge to the state's marine fisheries sector, according to a report by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI). The report presented at a stakeholder workshop at CMFRI in Kochi pointed out that 31% of the threadfin breams (Kilimeen) caught from the Kerala coast last year were juveniles -- below the minimum legal size (MLS).

"Due to this, the fisheries sector incurred a loss of Rs 178 crore and juvenile fishing of Indian oil sardines led to a loss of Rs 137 crore," the report stated.

Presenting the report, CMFRI principal scientist T M Najmudeen said that juvenile fishing was increasingly reported during the trawling ban in 2022 as against previous years.

In a case study done in threadfin breams to analyze the impact of the MLS implementation on Kerala's marine fisheries, the CMFRI has found that standing stock biomass had gone up by 27% while the

Representational picture



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yield was up by 47% and there was a 64% increase in recruitment of this fish after the regulation was put in place.

A significant percentage of sharks (82%), which are not covered by the MLS regulations, caught off the Kerala coast last year were below their size at first maturity.

Refraining from exploiting the young stocks would not only help fishermen increase their income but also aid in reviving the fishery, Najmudeen said.

CMFRI director A Gopalakrishnan said that CMFRI had suggested this regulation to all the coastal states, but only Kerala and Karnataka stepped in to implement the same.