

Malabar region of Kerala registered increase in green mussel production: CMFRI

Kozhikode (Kerala) | The production of green mussels, called 'kallumakkaya' in Malayalam, from the Malabar region of Kerala registered a substantial increase in 2022, the ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) said on Friday. CMFRI said that the production in the Malabar region, comprising Malappuram, Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasaragod districts of the state, recorded a 160 per cent jump compared to 2021. There was also a 15 per cent increase in the landings of green mussels from the sea in this region, it said in a release. The increase in the availability of mussel spats (seeds) in the sea led to many entering the mussel farming enterprises and that in turn helped to increase the production.

However, CMFRI scientists observed that the rise in production did not help mussel farmers and pickers reap proportional income owing to a slump in the price. In order to solve this issue, CMFRI has suggested focusing on developing value-added products from the green mussel, the release said. A report regarding this was presented at a stakeholder workshop held at CMFRI's Regional Station in Kozhikode.

The CMFRI also said, in the release, that marine fish landings of the region also increased with a total production of 1.99 lakh tonnes, 38 per cent more than 2021, from the four districts of Malabar last year. The increase was mainly due to the increased landings of Indian oil sardine and mackerel, it noted. The Malabar region also contributed 29 per cent to Kerala's marine fish landings which was 6.87 lakh tonnes in 2022.

The CMFRI, in its release, also said that habitat degradation in estuaries was affecting the coastal fish production. "Sand bar formation in the bar mouth of the estuaries causes disruption of natural flow of water and environmental balance affecting the fish resources. Restoration of the estuarine ecosystem and mangrove wetlands are also crucial for healthy marine fish production in the coastal waters," it said.

Fishermen, who attended the stakeholder workshop, expressed their concern over the recent trend of fall in price for export shrimp varieties, the release said. They suggested that ways for utilising the prospects of deep sea resources should be explored. The fishermen also said, according to the release, that extensive exploitation of seer fish in an unscientific manner would harm the sustainability of the resources. They demanded that Malabar region be given proper representation in policymaking and fisheries infrastructure support and in order to make effective the MLS (Minimum Legal Size) regulations, it should be implemented across the value chain, it added.