

Monsoon Trawl Ban Not Detrimental To Prawn Resources: CMFRI Study

Kochi, Feb 7 (IANS) A new study by the ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) has found that the monsoon trawl ban is not detrimental to kiddi prawn resources. The study, instead, has reaffirmed the efficacy of trawl ban by demonstrating its role in ensuring the long-term viability of the kiddi fishery along the Kerala coast.

Kiddi prawn has high demand in domestic and international markets. Fluctuations in the Kiddi prawn catch following the implementation of mechanised fishing ban during the monsoon season had led fishermen to believe that unharvested prawns would be lost forever as these resources move away from the shore to deeper waters. However, the CMFRI's study found that even as these species do migrate to deeper areas, they remain accessible to current fishing methods from areas at a depth of 50 to 100 meter immediately after the trawl ban period.

“Monsoon rainfall drives Kiddi prawn to deeper waters due to their preference for high salinity and low temperatures”, the study said. Moreover, the Kiddi prawn population near the shore during the monsoon season is exclusively made up of juveniles, according to this study. Restricting fishing during this period facilitates continued recruitment of prawns, enabling the resources to grow in size and numbers. As a result, the southwest monsoon trawler ban is advantageous to this species, the study observed.

The study also found that one part of the unharvested prawns resettle along the Indian coast, once the salinity is in their preferable range. The study was published in the latest issue of Regional Studies in Marine Science. “This study was carried out to address the socio economic issues raised by the trawl fishermen of Kerala during a stakeholder meeting held at CMFRI”, said Dr A P Dineshababu, Head of the Shellfish Fisheries Division of CMFRI and the lead author of the study. The study provided scientific evidence for how this species is distributed uniquely, using GIS-based spatial distribution tracking to explore how the movement and maturity of kiddi prawns correlate with environmental factors.