

CMFRI study shows positive impact of trawl ban on Karikadi prawn resources

Our Bureau

Kochi

The monsoon trawl ban is not detrimental to Kiddi (Karikadi) prawn resources, instead it is effective in ensuring the long-term viability of this particular commodity along Kerala coast, according to a study by the ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI).

Kiddi prawn (*Parapenaeopsis stylifera*) is found along India's southwest coast and has high demand in domestic and international markets. Fluctuations in the Karikadi 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 near-shore to deeper waters. However, CMFRI's study found that even as these species do migrate to deeper



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areas, they remain accessible to current fishing methods from areas at a depth of 50 to 100 metres immediately after the trawl ban period. Monsoon rainfall drives Karikadi prawns to deeper waters due to their preference for high salinity and low temperatures, the study said.

Moreover, the Karikadi population in near-shore waters during the monsoon sea-

son 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 trawl ban is advantageous to this species, the study observed. Trawling activity can be focused towards 50 to 100 metre depth between August – September (immediately following the ban period) to collect the resource that migrates to deeper waters during the monsoon, the study suggested.

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Further, it also found that one part of unharvested large-sized Karikadi prawns are getting resettled along the Indian coast, once the salinity is at their preferable range in the coastal waters. The study was published in the latest issue of *Regional Studies in Marine Science*.