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Falling sardine catch affecting small-scale fishers, says study

OUR BUREAU

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Small-scale fishers in Kerala have suffered economic loss owing to the decline in catch of oil sardine, said a study, indicating the depth of the crisis existing in the marine fisheries sector of the State.

“Following the decrease of oil sardine, the livelihood security of small-scale fisher-folk in the outboard ring seine category were affected with more than 50 per cent of the fishing efforts were falling since 2014,” said CMFRI Senior Scientist N Aswathy while presenting the findings at a symposium. This caused shooting up of unemployment in the coastal villages.

The findings of the study



Because of the dwindling catch, sardine prices have more than doubled in the retail market

carried out by the researchers in Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute was presented at the international symposium on marine ecosystems held at the CMFRI here.

Due to the dwindling catch, the average sardine price rose from ₹47 to ₹120 a kg in retail markets. Even as the fish price increased, the gross value of sardine

was decreased from ₹1,219 crore to ₹925 crore at retail level. The average net returns of outboard ring seiners were considerably reduced from ₹12,000 per fishing trip to ₹2,500 during 2014-18. During this period, the oil sardine landings in Kerala declined from 2.5 lakh tonnes to 77,000 tonnes, recording an annual average decline of 19.82 per cent, she said.

A record catch of nearly four lakh tonnes of oil sardine was registered in the State in 2012, but gradual decrease was recorded in the landings in the following years. Even though a slight increase was recorded in 2017 over the previous year, the sardine catch went down to 77,093 tonne in 2018.