

## Marine fish status: India's marine fish stock is healthy and sustainable, says report



Kochi, Sept 1 (IANS) Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Aquaculture Parshottam Rupala unveiled a study report that reveals India's marine fish stock is healthy and sustainable, reinforcing the country's position at the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Carried out by the ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), the study points out that a resounding 91.1

per cent of the 135 fish stocks assessed in 2022 were deemed healthy, marking a significant milestone in India's efforts to maintain the sustainability of its marine fisheries.

Titled 'Marine Fish Stock Status of India 2022', it also highlights the substantial reduction in unsustainable practices, with just 4.4 per cent of the stocks facing overfishing. Viewing that the report is a remarkable achievement in the country's pursuit of sustainable marine fisheries, CMFRI Director Dr A Gopalakrishnan said these findings are poised to substantiate India's position at the World Trade Organization (WTO) and is anticipated to have a favourable impact on the country's stance in international trade negotiations.

"The report's findings are expected to be a game-changer in the seafood market, allowing India to access premium markets and command higher prices for its seafood products. Sustainability has emerged as a pivotal criterion in the global seafood trade, and India's achievement in this realm is poised to bolster its seafood exports significantly," said Gopalakrishnan.

He said that these findings are a testament to the concerted efforts of the marine fisheries sector to strike a balance between economic growth and ecological conservation. CMFRI's special publication titled 'Good Management Practices in Seaweed Farming' was also released by the Union Minister. CMFRI has identified 333 prospective seaweed farming sites covering 23,950 hectares.

An interactive map of these sites has been developed jointly with the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management, Chennai. India has a seaweed production potential of 9.88 million tonnes wet weight per year while the current production stands at merely 52,107 tonnes wet weight per year. Seaweed farming has the potential to provide revenue of up to Rs 13.28 lakhs per hectare in a year on a dry-weight basis.