

# CMFRI launches deep-sea expedition to study seamount fisheries in Arabian Sea



The ICAR–Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) has initiated a deep-sea expedition to explore fishery resources linked to seamounts in the Arabian Sea, with a particular focus on cephalopods such as squids, cuttlefish and octopus. Funded by the Ministry of Earth Sciences at a total cost of ₹4.986 crore, the two-year project aims to document the diversity,

ecology, distribution and biology of cephalopods inhabiting seamount regions in the eastern Arabian Sea.

The project will also develop AI-based tools for automated identification of squid, cuttlefish and octopus species, which is expected to significantly strengthen scientific understanding of deep-sea biodiversity. Carried out by CMFRI's Kochi headquarters and Mangaluru Regional Centre in collaboration with the National Institute of Technology (NIT), Surathkal, the research project is being implemented under Vertical-3 of the Deep Ocean Mission of the Centre.

The first exploratory survey targeting selected seamounts in the southeastern Arabian Sea was carried out onboard the CMFRI research vessel F.V. Silver Pompano, operating from Kochi, led by Senior Scientist Divya Viswambharan and Scientist Kavitha M. Another scientific team headed by Principal Scientist V. Venkatesan conducted parallel sampling operations onboard a fishing vessel from Azheekal Fishing Harbour in Kollam.

The survey focused on documenting cephalopod assemblages associated with seamount habitats in the region. The findings are expected to generate valuable insights into the ecology and diversity of deep-sea cephalopods, which will help develop strategies for the conservation of seamount associated fishery resources, said Geetha Sasikumar, Principal Investigator of the project.