

Marine fish catch drops 5.3% in 2015, 51% decline in oil sardine landings

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KOCHI, MAY 2:

India's marine fish catch has dropped by 5.3 per cent in 2015 with oil sardines recording the sharpest fall of 51 per cent.

The overall marine fish landings fell to 3.40 million tonnes against 3.59 million tonnes in 2014, registering a fall of 1.89 lakh tonnes, scientific data estimated by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) said.

After all-time high landings of 3.94 million tonnes in 2012, the marine fish catch has shown a decreasing trend every year. It was 4 per cent in 2013, 5 per cent in 2014 and 5.3 per cent in 2015, scientists who estimated the data said.

In a major setback for the fisheries sector, a sharp decline of 2.79 lakh tonnes (51 per cent) was witnessed in oil sardines landings, mainly in the South West coast comprising Kerala, Karnataka and Goa.

A catch of 2.66 lakh tonnes oil sardines was recorded against 5.45 lakh tonnes in 2014. The contribution of oil sardines, which is the single largest contributor towards the total catch, narrowed from 15 per cent in 2014 to eight per cent in 2015.

Scientists at CMFRI attributed the sharp fall in sardine landings to several reasons including rising water temperature, the El Nino effect and over-exploitation. The catching of spawning stocks and algal bloom also played its role in the declining trend.

The institute has carried out a special review of the situation on the decline in sardine catch as it will affect the livelihood of the fishermen community.

The catch of other important species/ groups is lesser – sardines 2.56 lakh tonnes, Indian mackerel 2.38 lakh tonnes, penaeid prawns 1.99 lakh tonnes, ribbon fish 1.77 lakh tonnes, threadfin breams 1.63 lakh tonnes, croakers 1.55 lakh tonnes, non-penaeid prawns 1.49 lakh tonnes, scads 1.12 lakh tonnes and Bombay duck 1.10 lakh tonnes.

Of the nine maritime States and two union territories, Gujarat topped with landings of 7.21 lakh tonnes (21.2 per cent of share towards total catch), followed by Tamil Nadu with 7.09 lakh tonnes (20.8 per cent share) and Kerala with 4.82 lakh tonnes (14.2 per cent share).

(This article was published on May 2, 2016)