


## CIFT develops steel-based fishing sinker to replace lead

Dec 5, 2024, 19:11 IST

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Kochi: Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT) made a significant breakthrough in developing environmental-friendly alternatives to toxic lead-based sinkers used in fishing nets. It stated that initial experiments using materials such as stainless steel showed promising results, paving way for a sustainable solution to replace lead in fishing operations.

Lead, a toxic and persistent pollutant, poses a grave threat to marine ecosystem and human health. Its continued use in fishing sinkers led to mounting concerns globally, with some countries already banning lead-based sinkers and baits to mitigate environmental risks.

The institute's findings and recommendations were submitted to fisheries ministry, seeking approval to implement these alternatives on a national scale. "This initiative aligns India's fishing practices with global environmental standards while safeguarding the country's seafood export market," said CIFT fishing technology division head M P Remesan.

Fishing nets such as purse seines (large nets used in commercial fishing) often require over 1,000kg of lead, while trawls use up to 70kg. Fishermen report that prolonged use of these sinkers results in significant wear and tear within six months. This contamination can potentially affect marine life.

Fisher organizations have been voicing their concerns and submitted petitions to minister of state for fisheries George Kurian, urging govt to prioritize the adoption of eco-friendly alternatives and provide support for transitioning away from lead-based systems.