

India secures steady seafood export to US

TOI

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kochi: The scientifically done stock assessment study on marine mammals helped India clear the way for uninterrupted seafood export to the US market, according to Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute's (CMFRI) officials.

MARINE MAMMAL STUDY

They said that a key factor behind the approval was the scientific evidence and analysis provided by CMFRI through a nationwide marine mammal survey and stock assessment, covering India's entire exclusive economic zone (EEZ). The national marine fisheries service of the US recognized India's mitigation measures, effective policies to prevent intentional harm to marine mammals and enforce



US govt had mandated all seafood-exporting nations to scientifically demonstrate that their fishing practices do not cause unsustainable harm to marine mammals

vessel licensing and monitoring systems as comparable to the US standards.

The US govt had mandated all seafood-exporting nations to scientifically demonstrate that their fishing practices do not cause unsustainable harm to marine mammals. Following this, India's seafood tra-

de with the US faced uncertainty due to a lack of reliable, large-scale data on marine mammal abundance and bycatch in Indian waters. In response, CMFRI took the scientific lead, initiating a comprehensive stock assessment programme that employed vessel-based coastal and off-

shore surveys using the internationally accepted line-transect methodology, covering the entire EEZ of India.

"CMFRI's research formed the scientific foundation for India's submission of Comparability Finding Analysis and played a crucial role in securing clearance that helped the country safeguard a multi-billion-dollar trade and prevent a potential trade ban on Indian seafood exports to the US," said Ratheesh Kumar Raveendran, principal investigator of the 'Marine Mammal Stock Assessment in India' project.

CMFRI's study, in collaboration with marine products export development authority and fishery survey of India, produced first reliable abundance and bycatch estimates of marine mammals. It also confirmed the stocks of marine mammals in Indian waters are healthy.