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Rising fish yield in Bengaluru lakes sparks biodiversity concerns

Officials from the fisheries department maintained that they monitor fishing closely.

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Consuming fish from lakes can be harmful as industrial effluents contaminate the waterbodies. Credit: DH File Photo

Although fish yield in Bengaluru's lakes is increasing annually, experts and activists have raised concerns about its implications.

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fielding complaints urging a ban on commercial fishing or enhanced monitoring of fishing practices to safeguard lake ecology.

Commercial fishing, according to V Ramprasad, co-founder and convenor of Friends of Lakes, is causing a decline in fish species within the lakes, leading to biodiversity loss.

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"Fishermen often induce commercially valuable fish, leading to a decrease in fish species diversity and harming biodiversity," Ramprasad said.

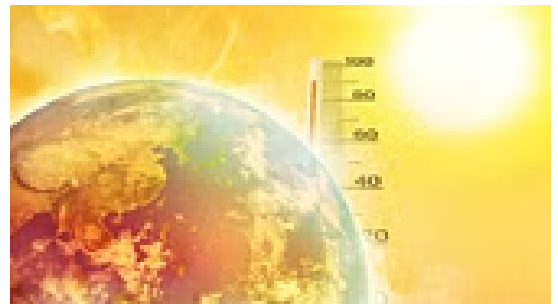
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Raghavendra B Pachhapur from NGO ActionAid added that fishermen's practices might also threaten bird species. "Bengaluru lakes host unique bird species. Fishermen's use of firecrackers to clear waters for fishing disrupts these birds, driving them away permanently," Pachhapur said.

A senior BBMP official revealed that several lakes lack suitable water quality for fishing. "Numerous lakes face pollution issues. Considering the potentially compromised yield due to pollution, I question the viability of fishing," the official said.

Professor TV Ramachandra of the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) cautioned against consuming fish caught in these lakes, as industrial effluents contaminate many waterbodies with heavy metals.

"Beyond sewage, industrial effluents containing heavy metals pollute several lakes. Consumption of fish from such lakes could pose health risks," Ramachandra warned.

Ramprasad called for monitoring of fishing activities rather than an outright ban. "Prioritising monitoring over a blanket ban is essential. Overcrowding lakes by exceeding permissible fish seed limits can deplete oxygen levels, leading to mass fish deaths," he reasoned.

Officials from the fisheries department maintained that they monitor fishing closely.

Chikkanna, deputy director of the fisheries department (Bengaluru Urban district), explained: "Licences hinge on lake water quality assessments. We collaborate with the BBMP and address complaints proactively."

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