

SA keeps its position on list of fish producers

Despite falling fish catches since 2009, South Africa was one of three African countries that retained their positions as major marine producers, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) *State of World Aquaculture and Fisheries 2012* report.



The report noted that while Morocco, South Africa and Senegal maintained their positions as Africa's three major marine producers, there was a general decrease in production in Peru and Chile as a consequence of the drop in catches, especially anchoveta (Peruvian anchovy).

In contrast, catches of Southern African anchovy continued to improve and its status was estimated to be fully exploited in 2009.

Whitehead's round herring had not been fully exploited, which meant that opportunities were high for fishers and aquaculture.

"A significant change concerns the Southern African pilchard, which was at a very high biomass and estimated to be fully exploited in 2004, but which now, under unfavourable environmental conditions, has declined considerably and is now fully exploited or fully utilised for public benefit," the report said.

The report was emphatic in condemning the condition of the perlemoen stock in southern Africa, particularly South Africa, saying it "continued to be worrying" as it was being "exploited heavily by illegal fishing".

The report warned that if the situation continued unchecked, it was likely the remaining perlemoen population could quickly be "over-exploited and probably depleted".

Other major fishing countries with downward trends in total catches in 2009 and 2010 were: Japan, Korea and Thailand in Asia; Argentina, Canada and Mexico in the Americas; Iceland in Europe; and, to a lesser extent, New Zealand.

Árni Mathiesen, assistant director-general at the FAO's fisheries and aquaculture department, said fisheries and aquaculture made crucial contributions to the world's well-being and prosperity.

"In the last five decades, world fish food supply has outpaced global population growth, and today fish constitutes an important source of nutritious food and animal protein for much of the world's population," he said.

Source: *Business Day* via I-Net Bridge

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