

China imposes ban on summer sea fishing

15 May 2023 | News

**The ban will be observed in parts of the north, east, and south to conserve marine fish stocks **



The ban will be observed in parts of the north, east, and south to conserve marine fish stocks

China will take a tough stance on illegal fishing by both domestic and foreign vessels in stretches of its coastal waters during the annual summer fishing moratorium, which started in May and will last through mid-August in most areas, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

The ban will be observed in parts of the north, east, and south to conserve marine fish stocks. Ministry described the ban as the country's most influential marine fish conservation effort and said that regions subject to the ban include the Bohai Sea, the Yellow Sea, the East China Sea, and the seas north of 12 degrees north in the South China Sea.

The ministry also launched a law-enforcement operation in conjunction with the Ministry of Public Security and the China Coast Guard in the waters off the Shandong and Fujian provinces, and the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region.

China has imposed the annual ban in the South China Sea since 1999, as part of efforts to promote the sustainable development of marine fishing and improve the marine ecology.

The China Coast Guard's South China Sea division and local authorities will patrol major fishing grounds and ports to ensure that the ban is observed.

Midway through the moratorium, three enforcement actions will take place in the Beibu Gulf, the Pearl River Estuary and along the marine border between Fujian and Guangdong provinces, in a bid to crack down on illegal fishing and protect marine resources.

The ban will end on Sept 1 for the Yellow Sea and the Bohai Sea north of 35 degrees north but will last until Sept 16 in the East China Sea depending on the fishing nets in use.

According to authorities in Qingdao, Shandong, the ban affects 17,000 fishermen. For the first time, the city will hand out marine conservation subsidies of some 70 million yuan (\$10.6 million).

The Zhejiang province Agriculture and Rural Affairs Department said that after May 8, it would ban the sale of eight species of frozen or living catch, including hairtail, yellow croaker, and pomfret. According to official data, authorities banned nearly 8,000 illegal vessels in 2021.

China introduced the 14th Five-Year National Fisheries Development Plan in 2022. According to the plan, by 2025 China is targeted to reach 69 million tonnes of aquatic production. China's fishing industry has been undergoing major structural shifts. China's fisheries policy restricted fishing and reduced the number of vessels since 2016. In 2020, 40,000 working vessels had been banned from coastal waters, due to which fisheries production was reduced to 9.5 million tonnes. In 2022 China's fish production reached 10 million tonnes and working vessels were restricted compared to 2021.

China became the world's leading aquaculture producer in 1989 and it remains the same today. In recent years industrialisation, urbanisation and other things affected Chinese fish production.

In recent years, China has gone through a major transition in the fishery trade. China is becoming a leading processor of fish raw material for re-export into a country that increasingly sources high-quality aquatic products for domestic consumption. Although China has long been the world's top fish exporter.

But rising domestic demand for high-quality seafood is brought on by China's expanding middle class. Policy measures taken by the central government to facilitate fishing imports have resulted in soaring imports and declining re-exports. For the first time in decades, in 2022, China registered a fishery trade deficit. China's fishery imports reached \$23.7 billion and fishery exports during the same period were \$23 billion.

China wanted to remain one of the largest fish producers in the world and to conserve the fish stock China has imposed a ban on fishing.

Shraddha Warde

shraddha.warde@mmactiv.com