

Lakshadweep's tuna fisheries & Dakshin



~1000 years ago

Tuna fishery is practiced in the Maldives.

~200 years ago

The fishery is introduced to Minicoy Island as it was colonised.

1956

Minicoy becomes part of the Union Territory of Laccadive, Minicoy, & Aminidivi Islands of India

1960s

The pole and line fishery is introduced to the rest of the islands by the Lakshadweep Department of Fisheries.

1980s

The introduction of motorised boats fitted with bait tanks boosts fish production. 1760 tonnes of tuna landed in 1980. The number of specialised crafts increased from 194 to 752.

2001 to 2008

India's export of tuna & tuna products like masmin, grows from 1230 tonnes to 37303 tonnes. Masmin becomes an important source of revenue for the islands.

2012

The total number of boats increased to 2017. A decline in baitfish resources and transitions to an unregulated reef-based fishery is reported.

Dec 2012

Dakshin begins in-water surveys to assess baitfish populations. This is complemented by a feasibility assessment study for introducing participatory monitoring of the P&L fishery.

Mid-2019

Series of multi-stakeholder co-management meetings were conducted in Agatti, Kavaratti, and Minicoy. Fisher communities ask for regulating major unsustainable practices affecting the P&L fisheries. CBFM completes five years. 4037 fishing records are collected by 50 boats over 4 years.

Feb 2019

Complementary action research on various aspects of the P&L fisheries was initiated to generate the needed information to build a P&L fisheries co-management initiative for Lakshadweep. This included mapping fisheries stakeholders and their dynamics, developing protocols for in-water baitfish population monitoring, participatory mapping of baitfish resources, and documentation of the traditional fisheries management regime of Minicoy Island.

May 2018

Co-management dialogue is initiated. Multistakeholder meetings were held to gauge the feasibility of a co-management approach to fisheries management in Lakshadweep.

2016 & 2017

CBFM and outreach initiatives continue. Tuna landings is 13505 tonnes.

2015

An annual outreach calendar series "Fish for the Future" is launched. CBFM is launched in Minicoy.

2014

The Community-based Fisheries Monitoring (CBFM) programme is launched. A study of the market dynamics of the fishery starts.

2020

Covid-19 pandemic hits. Major losses to pole and line tuna fishers as the masmin trade is affected.

2021

Islands in turmoil due to changing development policies. Fisheries issues take a back seat on the islands.

2022

Resuming research and interventions. Strengthening collective action and networks with stakeholders.

2023

Participatory baitfish resource maps were developed for better spatial management of batfish stocks that are critical to the pole and line tuna fishery of Lakshadweep. Launched a handbook to promote sustainable octopus hunting practices in the Lakshadweep.

2024

Along with the Fish for the Future calendar, Dakshin organised the Lagoon Fest to celebrate Lakshadweep's endearing connections with the sea. Bringing together people across generations, the festival highlighted islanders' close ties with lagoons, reefs, beaches, and maritime traditions, while also emphasising the fragility of these ecosystems.

2025

Dakshin launched its integrated SeaChange approach in Lakshadweep to address the archipelago's complex social, economic, and environmental challenges through intersectoral interventions.