

FARMING

Kemfri: Fish farming initiative could boost tilapia stocks

Study shorten maturation of the species and proves it can be farmed anywhere

BY HAROLD AYODO

Tilapia farmed in cages can grow to full size in six months and reach twice its normal size, reports the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Institute (Kemfri).

The institute has just completed a study that involved rearing tilapia in cages to boost stocks and shorten maturation of the fish.

Kemfri Aquaculture programme co-ordinator Harrison Charo-Karisa says the study proved farming the fish can be done anywhere.

Starting with a weight of 30g the Nile Perch matured to 450g in six months. "We placed 130 fingerlings in an abandoned quarry in Nyakach constituency early last year and harvested them in October," says Dr Charo-Karisa. The site was an abandoned quarry.

The researchers used local agricultural by-products to make food for the fish, including wheat bran, cotton seed cake and fresh water shrubs.

Kemfri Aquaculture Nutrition Research Officer Jonathan Munguti says they analysed 35 different products before coming up with a cocktail of cheaper alternatives.

"We processed the feed at our site in Sangoro, Nyakach..." "We fed the fish regularly inside their



FISH FARMING

Aquaculture experts say there are several advantages of rearing fish in cages compared to ponds.

Feeding and harvesting is in cages is less labour intensive than in ponds.

But there are concerns that tilapia farmed in high-density cages could disrupt breeding cycles in Lake Victoria.

Kenya Marine and Fisheries Institute researchers harvest tilapia from an artificial water body in Nyakach constituency. (PHOTO: TITUS MUNALA)

out natural water bodies, including Machakos, Bomet and Sagana.

"We are involved in similar studies in Uganda and Ethiopia," Munguti says.

Moi University Department of Biological Sciences scholar David Liti is the co-ordinator of the project, which is a collaboration between the university, Kemfri,

Universitat fur Bodenkultur Wien, Austrian Academy of Sciences and the University of Bologna.

Others are the ministries of livestock and fisheries in Kenya and Uganda, Egerton University and Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research.

cages," Dr Munguti says.

A control group that fed on natural planktons weighed less than 200g after the same period.

"Nile Tilapia is hardy, disease resistant and matures first and is consumed world wide," Charo-Karisa says.

Munguti says the species can survive in relatively polluted water bodies.

The researchers are now experimenting at Obenge Beach in Lake Victoria and in areas with-

Did you know?

The only dog that doesn't have a pink tongue is the chow whose tongue is black.

A squid has 10 tentacles.

A snail's reproductive organs are in its head.

A group of owls is called a parliament.

An elephant can be pregnant for up to two years. Chickens can't swallow while they are upside down.

Just one cow gives off enough harmful methane gas in a single day to fill around 400 litre bottles.

— Compiled By Maore Ithula

