

DOF MAINTAINS VESSEL LICENSING APPROACH AS MECHANISM FOR SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF NATIONAL FISHERY RESOURCES

BERNAMA News | General News | 17/07/2026 | Author: THIVYAMALINI RAMALU | Others

PUTRAJAYA, July 17 (Bernama) -- The Department of Fisheries (DOF) maintains the approach of managing fishing vessel licensing as one of the mechanisms to ensure the country's fishery resources are managed sustainably, while also considering the needs of the fishing community that relies on the fishery sector as a source of income.

Its director-general, Datuk Adnan Hussain, said it is in line with the Fisheries Act 1985 (Act 317) and the Fisheries Regulations (Marine) (Licensing of Local Fishing Vessels) 1985.

"This approach aims to control the fishing capacity so that the country's fishery resources are continuously preserved and can be utilised sustainably," he said in a statement today.

Based on DOF records, a total of 16,894 fishing vessels were recorded nationwide last year, and the results of the fishery resource assessment study conducted from 2013 to 2016 showed that the biomass of the country's fish stocks has only remained between 16 to 48 per cent compared to the original stocks in the 1960s.

Adnan said that the findings are among the foundations for the implementation of continuous fisheries resource management measures.

According to him, licensing management is not just an administrative process, but rather part of the effort to ensure that fishing activities can continue responsibly without compromising the sustainability of resources.

"The DOF understands that fishing activities are the main source of livelihood for many fishermen, especially traditional fishermen. For that reason, every policy implemented takes into account the balance between the needs of the fishing community and the responsibility to preserve the country's fishery resources so that the benefits can be enjoyed continuously," he said.

He said the DOF also continuously evaluates the implementation of the licensing system to ensure it meets the current needs of the fishing sector and provides opportunities for individuals who are truly qualified and depend on the sector as their main source of income.

For fishermen who do not yet have a licence, the DOF provides opportunities through the Regularisation Programme which is implemented from time to time to fill the vacancies of cancelled licences.

In addition, coastal fishermen can also submit applications for special boat licences via the District Fisheries Office to be considered according to the specified terms and criteria.

The DOF always provides opportunities for eligible fishermen to obtain licences through the mechanisms provided.

"The Regularisation Programme and special boat licence applications provide them with the opportunity to operate legally, thereby allowing access to various government assistance and initiatives available for the fishing community," he added.

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TAGS: DOF, vessel licensing, fishery resources, managed sustainably, Adnan Hussain

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