

Aquatic lives of Saint Martin in grave danger

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Dhaka : Saint Martin's Island, one of the precious natural resources of Bangladesh seems to be becoming victim of pollution, caused by human activities and neglect to biodiversity.

Preventive actions must be taken immediately to save this only coral island of the country, before it is too late.

While walking on the shore of Saint Martin recently, a sad sight caught our eyes_ hundreds of dead fishes washed up on the beach. Many were wondering why these fishes ended up dying like this.

What can be the reason behind this mass death of fishes? This is rare but not uncommon. This natural phenomenon has a term called "Fish Kill" or "Fish die-off". It refers to die-off of fishes or aquatic life in mass.

There are several reasons that can cause fish kill. But the most common reason of fish kill is the depletion of oxygen in the water. There are many other reasons other than oxygen depletion like overpopulation of certain species, algae bloom, diseases and parasites by virus or bacteria, change in weather, sudden increase or decrease in temperature of water etc.

But the fish kill on Saint Martin consisted mostly of a same species of small fishes and jelly-fish. There were some other types of fish, but the number was really low and it cannot be said that that they died of same reason also. So, it is possible that the resources for that specific species of fish became insufficient and caused mass

death. Overpopulation, temperature or the ability to adapt to the change of oxygen volume of that specific species of fish can be a valid explanation of this die off.

In this case low concentration of oxygen, temperature, overpopulation or pollution can be blamed. The way these factors cause fish kill-

Aquatic hypoxia

Aquatic life depends on the dissolved oxygen in the water to survive. When the dissolved oxygen level of water gets low it causes aquatic hypoxia and the depletion of oxygen causes mass kill of aquatic lives. Many factors can lead to this event but the most common is pollution or when the water gets overly enriched with minerals and nutrients causing algae to bloom faster. Algae uses up the oxygen of other aquatic life causing oxygen depletion for them.

Temperature

As the temperature of the country is changing, rapid fluctuations of temperature can cause result in fish kill. Temperature can cause variations of oxygen in water. Usually, hot water tends to have lesser dissolved oxygen than cool water. It is possible that while the weather in Bangladesh is going through a change, from winter to spring, the temperature of water bodies is increasing also. So, the increase in temperature causing oxygen depletion and cool water fish's inability to cope up with this change can be one of the reasons of this event.

Overpopulation

The resources in nature is limited. So, when a species become overpopulated, they suffer from lack of foods or other resources. Resulting them fighting for their survival and in many cases it can lead to mass death.

Pollution

Environment pollution caused by human is now one of the major threats to every elements of nature. From air to water to soil; human have brought disaster to every elements of nature. Throwing fertilisers, human wastes, toxins etc. destroys natural habitat of aquatic organisms causing natural disasters like these.

This incident should be considered with utmost urgency. Because fish kills are often caused by environmental stress indicating change in the environment triggered by pollution or human activities other than only natural causes. Proper investigation is needed from the authority in this event. Prevention of such natural disaster is really hard because it is really difficult to tell when will this disaster take place. Removal of fishes is very difficult in large water bodies like ocean. So, the controllable factors such as pollution which caused by humans should be kept in check by authority for further decay of natural resources.

Saint Martin's natural resources and biodiversity is Bangladesh's one of the most valuable assets. The extinction of organisms here can cause far reaching consequences like imbalance in natural order. We should be careful about what we do, because nature will treat us in the same way we treat her. So, the decay of this important treasure should not be taken lightly.