

Maran cage fish farmers suffering huge losses as Sg Pahang water level drops, fish die

By **Mohd Rafi Mamat** - August 8, 2024 @ 7:06pm



Cage fish farmer Nurmadiah Jamal and her brother have lost RM38,400 since last month when dipping water levels in Sungai Pahang caused 16,800 of their fish to die. NSTP/MOHD RAFI MAMAT

MARAN: The prolonged hot weather and ongoing El Nino conditions has caused water levels in Sungai Pahang to drop to the lowest levels in recent years, leaving cage fish farmers suffering huge losses.

Farmers have been staring at losses ranging between RM5,000 and RM50,000 over the last few weeks when their ikan patin (silver catfish) and tilapia of various sizes died due to the low water levels.

Mohd Azmi Jamal, 41, said he lost patin species worth some RM38,000 when more than 16,000 fish of various sizes reared in 28 cages died in stages since last month.

"We have been experiencing a significant drop in river water levels over the past three years and this year the water dropped drastically. The situation is worse this year as the sandy stretches appear to have become broader and longer.

"My cage fish started to die in stages since the dry season hit during Aidilfitri in April. Some 12,000 tilapia and patin fish reared in eight cages died.

"Cage fish farmers are suffering as the dry season appears to worsen and the river water continues to dip, leaving the river shallow and some parts having dried up... the cages are left exposed on the riverbed," he said.

Meanwhile, Azmi's sister Nurmadihah, 34, who manages the business with him, said currently only four cages remained in the water while another 24 had been left stranded on the exposed riverbed.

"When the river water level drops and only certain sections of the cage are covered in water, it impacts the size of the fish species. The water quality is affected and in some areas the water emits a foul smell, resulting in the fish appearing unhealthy and weak," she said, adding that there are only some 500 fish remaining in their cages.