

**Gulf of Thailand is closed for 120 days during mackerel spawning period,
up to 30 million baht penalty of violation will be applied**

Department of Fisheries (DOF) announces an annual closure of the gulf of Thailand for 120 days covering the areas in Prachuap Khiri Khan, Chumphon and Surat Thani from February 15 - June 14, 2022. Violation will be considered as a serious offense resulting in imprisonment and being liable to a fine up to 30 million baht.

Dr. Chalermchai Sri-on, Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives mentioned after the ceremony of annual closure that DOF's research findings had shown the importance of Prachuap Khiri Khan, Chumphon and Surat Thani as areas of spawning and raising to juvenile for many economic aquatic animals especially mackerels. Accordingly, DOF enforced this measurement to ensure a well-balanced between harvesting and production capacity of the nature. The gulf closure is a method to manage local fishery resources, thus jointly participated by local fishermen, fishery associations, schools, and government organizations especially a prototype community and a volunteer watch out network for fishery.

DOF reiterated that the person who violates this measure will be considered in breach of the Royal Ordinance of Fisheries B.E. 2558 (2015), Article 70 and shall be liable to a fine of 5,000 - 30 million baht, depending on the size of the fishing boat or 5 times of the value of aquatic animals obtained from fishing; whichever is higher and must be subject to administrative penalties as well.

Aside from the measure, MOAC issued certificates of standard in artisanal fisheries, donated 700,000 giant fresh water prawn bloodstocks, released 220,000 coastal species, including 100,000 black tiger prawns, 100,000 Banana prawns and 20,000 sea basses and launched a Fisherman Market project, helping fishermen and artisanal fishery in distributing their products to 23 coastal provinces that have been affected by Covid-19 epidemic. The project also provided a good opportunity for locals to develop their processing and marketing skills as well as packaging development making value added products.

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