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**BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL, PRINCIPLE  
BENCH, NEW DELHI**

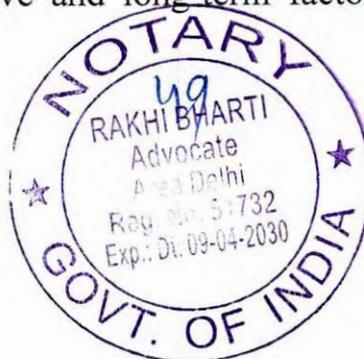
**ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO.718/2024**

**SUOMOTO CASE NEWS ITEM TITLED "सर्वेक्षण यमुना नदी में दक्षी प्रजाति  
की मछलियाँ घटी विदक्षी बड़ी सर्वे में मिली 126 प्रजाति की मछलियाँ "Appearing in  
Amar Ujala Dated 09.05.2024"**

**REPLY AFFIDAVIT ON BEHALF OF RESPONDENT NO.5**  
**DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES, GOVT. OF INDIA**

I Sh. Rakesh Kumar, S/o. Late Krishnandan Singh Aged 48  
Years, working as Deputy Commissioner (Fisheries), office at Department of  
Fisheries ,Chanderlok Building, New Delhi.

1. That I am authorised by the competent authority to file the present reply affidavit and well aware about the facts and circumstances of the case.
2. That the decline in native fish species populations is a complex issue with multiple contributing factors, and the presence of exotic species is not the sole cause. Studies worldwide indicate that this decline is typically driven by a combination of cumulative and long-term factors rather than a single reason.

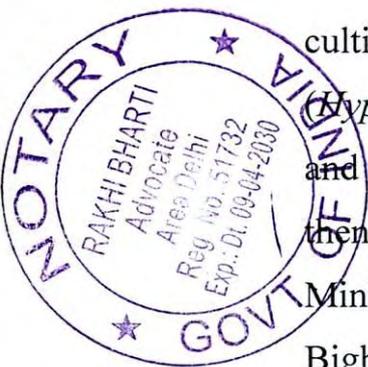


3. That the key factors contributing to the decrease in native fish populations include competition for water, habitat alteration, and pollution. Dam construction, in particular, fragments major rivers and blocks essential fish migration routes, preventing species from reaching spawning grounds and leading to local extinctions. Poor water quality due to nutrient pollution and contaminants poses a major threat to aquatic life. Additionally, overexploitation, indiscriminate harvesting, and the use of illegal fishing gear contribute to the decline of fish stocks. The encroachment of riverine land and climate change also exacerbate the challenges faced by native fish species.
  
4. That the introduction of exotic fish species—whether through aquaculture escapes, pet releases, or recreational fishing practices—often compounds existing environmental stresses. These multiple pressures collectively contribute to the decline in native fish populations. Globally, similar scenarios are observed in the Mekong Delta, Yangtze River Basin, Laguna Lake, and Lake Victoria, where native biodiversity is under threat due to such cumulative impacts.
  
5. That it is submitted that the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Govt. of India is allocated the matters regarding 'Promotion and development of fishing and fisheries (inland, marine and beyond territorial waters) and its associated activities', under Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961. The Department of Fisheries, Govt. of India is responsible for matters relating to formulation of policies and schemes pertaining to development of Inland, Marine and Coastal Fisheries and Fishery Institutes including its four subordinate institutions and one autonomous body and one regulatory authority. The subject matter of 'Fisheries' falls under 'Entry 21' of the State List, under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution. The Department of Fisheries, Govt. of



India advises the State Governments /Union Territories (UTs) in formulation of policies and programmes in the field of fisheries.

6. That it is respectfully submitted that a National Committee to oversee and regulate introduction of exotic aquatic species in Indian waters was constituted by Government of India vide order of even number dated 17<sup>th</sup> July 1996 with the following objectives i) to objectively review and assess the pros and cons of introduction of exotic aquatic species (fin and shell fishes, Molluscs, Seaweeds etc.) into the country; ii) to regulate and monitor the introductions through ICAR research institutes or any other agency deemed suitable for the purpose; and to develop guidelines/Code of ethics for future introductions, both from outside the country and also from one region to the other within the country. The copy of the same is annexed as **Annexure-I**. The National Committee is responsible for approving the introduction of new species and developing import protocols based on comprehensive risk assessments to minimize potential ecological and economic impacts.
7. That it is respectfully submitted that based on the National committee recommendation, the then Department of Agriculture & Cooperation vide letter dated 19.12.1997 which is annexed as **Annexure-II** prohibited the cultivation of exotic magur (*Clarias gariepinus*) and Bighead Carp (*Hypophthalmichthys nobilis*). Through subsequent orders dated 10.01.2013 and 20.02.2019 which are annexed as **Annexure-III & Annexure IV**, the then Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying (Fisheries Division), Ministry of Agriculture reaffirmed the ban on exotic Magur/Catfish and Bighead due to the species threat to native ecosystems and aquaculture. Additionally, taking cognizance of the unauthorized introduction of exotic Red Piranha (*Pygocentrus nattereri*) and other members of the sub-family *Serrasalminae*, the then Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying,

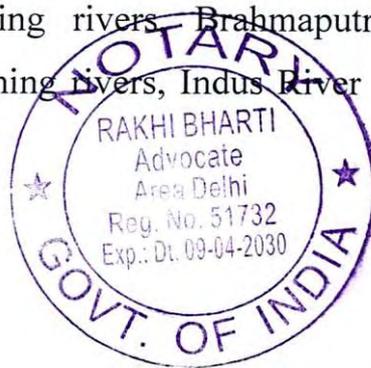


Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India, issued an advisory to closely monitor the trade, breeding, and further spread of these species, which were being clandestinely introduced by vested interests. The copy of the Advisory is annexed as Annexure-V.

8. That it is submitted that the Department of Fisheries, Govt. of India through the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), is implementing the River Ranching Programme under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY). The programme aims to restore native fish stocks, conserve biodiversity, improve fish productivity in rivers, and support the livelihoods of fisher communities. Under this scheme, financial assistance is provided for stocking fingerlings of native fish species at the rate of ₹3 per fingerling (80–100 mm in size) in major river basins across the country, including the River Yamuna.

The Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, under PMMSY has so far sanctioned ranching of 1386 lakh fingerlings at a total cost of 41.57 Crore in 17 states namely Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Sikkim, West Bengal, Nagaland, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh with specific approvals of 1.15 crore for Himachal Pradesh, 12.95 crore for Uttar Pradesh and 0.25 crore for Uttarakhand to support their river ranching efforts.

As on date 1180.94 lakh fingerlings of *Labeo rohita*, *Catla catla*, *Cirrhinus mrigala*, brown trout and other locally available native species have been ranched in the rivers of Ganges and its tributaries including Yamuna river, Mahanadi river and adjoining rivers, Brahmaputra and Barak river distributaries and other adjoining rivers, Indus River and Vainganga and Wardha rivers.



5

The Fisheries Department of Uttarakhand is actively engaged in the conservation and propagation of native fish species, with particular emphasis on Mahseer, which is designated as the State Fish. Between 2020 and 2024, the department has stocked approximately 17.5 lakh Mahseer fish fingerlings, including in the Yamuna River, to support species conservation. Similarly, the Fisheries Department of Himachal Pradesh has taken steps to restore native aquatic biodiversity by ranching 22,000 fingerlings of Indian Major Carps into the Yamuna River during the financial year 2022–23.

9. That to promote the conservation of native fish fauna, the Department of Fisheries, through the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), also promoting the concept of State Fish introduced by Indian Council for Agricultural Research- National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources (ICAR-NBFGR), which encourages States to adopt and conserve regionally important fish species, the programme aims to replenish native fish stocks, restore ecological balance, and raise awareness about species at risk. At present, 21 aquatic species are designated either as State fish, State aquatic animal or State animal. Out of the 36 'States and Union Territories' of India, 22 have either adopted or declared their State fish and 3 have declared State aquatic animal. The copy of the same is annexed as **Annexure-VI**.

10. That the Respondent No.5 is ready to assist this Hon'ble Tribunal as and when directed and file additional reply if required.



6

*Rakesh Kumar*

Deponent

RAKESH KUMAR  
उप आयुक्त (फ. ) Deputy Commissioner(FY)  
भारत सरकार / Govt. of India  
मत्स्यिकी, पशुपालन एवं डेयरी मंत्रालय  
Min. of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying  
मत्स्य पालन विभाग / Department of Fisheries  
कृषि भवन, नई दिल्ली-110001  
Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi-110001

**Verification**

*Identified the deponent who has signed in my presence*

04 JUL 2025

Verified at New Delhi on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2025 that the contents of the above affidavit are correct to best of my knowledge and belief and nothing material is concealed therefrom.

04 JUL 2025

*Rakesh Kumar*

Deponent

RAKESH KUMAR  
उप आयुक्त (फ. ) Deputy Commissioner(FY)  
भारत सरकार / Govt. of India  
मत्स्यिकी, पशुपालन एवं डेयरी मंत्रालय  
Min. of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying  
मत्स्य पालन विभाग / Department of Fisheries  
कृषि भवन, नई दिल्ली-110001  
Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi-110001



**CERTIFIED THAT THE DEPONENT**

Shri / Smt. / Km. *Rakesh Kumar*  
S/o, W/o, D/o.....  
R/o.....  
Identified by Shri/Smt. *Sant*  
has solemnly affirmed to me at Delhi  
on .....  
that the contents of the affidavit which  
have been read over & explained to him/her  
are true and correct to his/her knowledge

NOTARY PUBLIC GOVT. OF INDIA

*Adarsh Sanket*  
*Notary Public*

7  
**Annexure I**

सं०/No. : 31016/1/96-FY(3)  
 तार : अग्रीइंडिया "ए"  
 Telegram : AGRINDIA "A"

2 (21)

दूरभाष/Phone : 3382011  
 3388911  
 टेलिक्स/Telex : 31-65054 AGR I IN  
 फैक्स सं०/Fax No. :

भारत सरकार  
 GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
 कृषि मंत्रालय  
 MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE  
 कृषि एवं सहकारिता विभाग  
 DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & COOPERATION

कृषि भवन, डा० राजेन्द्र प्रसाद मार्ग, नई दिल्ली-110001  
 KRISHI BHAWAN, DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD ROAD, NEW DELHI-110001

दिनांक/Dated : 17<sup>th</sup> July, 1996

ORDER

SUBJECT: Constitution of a National Committee to oversee and regulate introduction of exotic aquatic species in Indian waters - reg.

\*\*\*\*\*

Exotic fish species have been introduced into the country from time to time for various purposes. These introductions have mainly comprised the ornamental fishes for aquaria and fast growing species for complementing and supplementing the indigenous spectrum of cultivable fishes for aquaculture. In recent years, a number of requests have been received for introduction of fish species of exotic origin, primarily for aquaculture in both inland and coastal waters. While such species are expected to help in increasing fish production and thereby enhancing the exports, their introduction has to be evaluated very carefully so that the exotics do not have any adverse effect on the existing fish fauna/bio-diversity and the ecology of waters where they are introduced.

2. In such a perspective, it has been decided with the approval of the competent authority to constitute a National Committee in the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation to assess and recommend introduction of exotic aquatic species in Indian waters, including the seas.

3. The constitution of the Committee is as under:

- |    |  |          |
|----|--|----------|
| 1  | Joint Secretary (Fy), D/o Agri. & Coopn.                           | Chairman |
| ii | Director, Central Institute of Brackish-water Aquaculture, Madras. | Member   |

.....2/-

- 2 -

iii) Director, Central Institute of Fresh Water Aquaculture, Bhubaneswar	Member
iv) Director, Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Cochin	-do-
v) Director, Central Inland Capture Fisheries Research Institute,	-do-
vi) Director, National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources, Lucknow	-do-
vii) Director, Zoological Survey of India, Calcutta	-do-
viii) Director, National Research Centre of Cold Water Fisheries, Haldwani	-do-
ix) Representative of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research	-do-
x) Representative of the M/o Environment & Forests, New Delhi	-do-
xi) Representative of Marine Products Export Development Authority, Cochin	-do-
xii) Dr. E.G. Silas, Fisheries Expert	-do-
xiii) Dr. S.P. Ayyar, Fisheries Expert	-do-
xiv) Fisheries Development Commissioner, D/o Agri. & Coopn.	Member Secretary

(The tenure of members at Sl. No. xii and xiii will be for two years).

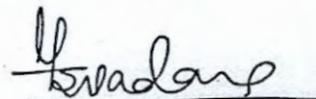
4. The terms of reference of the above Committee are (i) to objectively review and assess the pros and cons of introductions of exotic aquatic species (fin and shell fishes, molluscs, seaweeds, etc.) into the country; (ii) to regulate and monitor the introductions through ICAR Research Institutes or any other Agency deemed suitable for the purpose and (iii) to develop guidelines/code of ethics for future introductions, both from outside the country and also from one region to the other within the country.

5. The Committee will meet every six months to discuss the issues.

6. Members would draw TA/DA from their respective organisations for attending the meetings of the Committee. TA/DA for Experts shall be borne by the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation.

ISSUED  
8/6/7  
10/7

o/c



(Y.S. YADAVA)

Fisheries Development Commissioner

....3/-

(30)

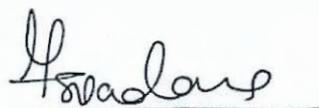
- 3 -

To

The respective members.

The respective Ministries/Departments/State Govts./Organisations  
for nomination of their representatives.

Copy to: APS to AM/BS to MOS(K)/PPS to Secretary (A&C)/PS to  
AS(D)/PS to JS(FY)/PS to FDC.



(Y.S. YADAVA)

Fisheries Development Commissioner

106718/2021/TRADE-DOF

अप्रैरिडि "A"  
AGRINDIA "A"Copy  
Annexure IIदूरभाष/Phone 3382011  
3388911  
टेलिग्राफ/Telex : 31-65054 AGRIN  
फैक्स नं० /Fax No. :

भारत सरकार  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
कृषि मंत्रालय  
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE  
कृषि एवं सहकारिता विभाग  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & COOPERATION

कृषि भवन, डा० राजेन्द्र प्रसाद मार्ग, नई दिल्ली-110001  
KRISHI BHAWAN, DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD ROAD, NEW DELHI-110001

दिनांक/Dated : 19.12.1997.

To

The Secretary (Fisheries),  
Government of \_\_\_\_\_

All State Govt./UT.

Subject:-Unauthorized introduction of exotic magur  
and big head - controlling measures-reg.

Sir,

I am to invite your kind attention on the subject cited above and to say that the First Meeting of the National Committee to Oversee and Regulate Introduction of Exotic Aquatic Species in Indian Waters was held under the chairmanship of Joint Secretary (Fisheries) at Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi on 9.10.97. The Committee discussed the issue of "Unauthorized introduction of exotic magur and big head" as one of the Agenda Items and recommended as follows:

"The Ministry of Agriculture should write to all the States/UTs to take immediate steps to destroy the existing stock of exotic magur and big head which have been introduced into the country without official sanctions. All hatcheries may be identified and destroyed by the concerned States. It was stressed that exotic magur (Clarias gariepinus) should not establish in the natural environment and cross with the endemic species Clarius batrachus. A strict controlling measure should also be adopted to avoid spread of exotic disease(s) from Clarius gariepinus to the endemic fishes."

106718/2021/TRADE-DOF

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5/8

2. It is requested that necessary action may be taken immediately on the above said recommendations made by the Committee under intimation to this Ministry.

Yours faithfully,

*Y.S. Yadava*

( Y.S. Yadava )  
Fisheries Development Commissioner

Copy for information and necessary action to:-

Director of Fisheries  
Government of All State Govt/UT.

Copy also for information to:-

(as per list attached)

All Members of the National Committee on "Introduction of Exotic Aquatic Species in Indian Waters".

*All the members 1-12 As per list*

Y.S. Yadava  
23/12

## Annexure III

786

No.31035/5/98-Fy (2)/(Trade)  
Government of India  
Ministry of Agriculture  
Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries

Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi-110 114,  
Dated the 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2013.

To  
The Secretary (Fisheries),  
Government of All States/UTs

**Subject: Unauthorised culture of exotic magur (*Clarias gariepinus*)— controlling measures-reg.**

Sir,

I am directed to refer to the abovementioned subject and to state that as per the decision taken by the National Committee constituted under the Chairmanship of Joint Secretary (Fisheries) to oversee and regulate introduction of exotic aquatic organisms into Indian waters in its first meeting, all the State Governments and UTs were requested vide this Ministry's letter No. 31016/1/96-Fy (3) dated 19<sup>th</sup> December, 1997 to take immediate steps to destroy the existing stocks of exotic magur (*Clarias gariepinus*) and big head fish which had been introduced without official sanction in the country (copy enclosed).

The above decision of the Government was challenged in the Hon'ble High Court of Kerala through a petition filed by Shri C. D. Sebastian and others from Kerala. In their judgement on this matter, Hon'ble High Court of Kerala while staying the implementation of the Government's instruction to dismantle the exotic magur farms and hatcheries, directed this Ministry to consider the representation of the petitioners and pass an order on the same (copy enclosed). The matter was discussed in the third meeting of the said National Committee and it was suggested to continue the ban and also to file an appropriate order in the Hon'ble High Court of Kerala in support of the Ministry's directives by bringing out the scientific findings.

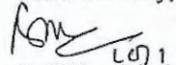
Accordingly, the facts submitted in the representation of the petitioners were duly and carefully considered in the light of factual information based on the scientific evidence as furnished by the fisheries institutes. However, the representation of the petitioner was found not sustainable and hence rejected vide this Ministry's Order dated 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2000 (copy enclosed), The said Order was also circulated to all the State Governments and UTs for their information, guidance and necessary action vide this Ministry's letter of even number dated 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2000 (copy enclosed).

Again, the Hon'ble High Court of Andhra Pradesh also passed a common judgement on different writ petitions filed by various parties for continuation of culture of *Clarius gariepinus* as against the Governments ban order dismissing these writ petitions with cost and vacated all interim orders. The State Governments and UTs were informed of this judgement for their guidance vide this Ministry's letter No. 35035/6/2000-Fy (2) dated 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2002 (copy enclosed).

It is again requested that appropriate necessary action may be please taken to ensure strict compliance of the ban on culture of exotic magur (*Clarias gariepinus*) in your State/UT.

Encl.: As above

Yours faithfully,

  
(B. Vishnu Bhat)

Fisheries Development Commissioner

Copy for information and necessary action:

1. Director of Fisheries, Government of All States/UTs
2. Deputy Director General (Fisheries), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), New Delhi

Issued

**Annexure IV**

No. 35029/1/2017-Fy (Trade)  
Government of India  
Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare  
Department of Fisheries

Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi-110001

Dated the 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2019

To

The Pr. Secretary/Secretary (Fisheries),  
All Coastal States and UTs.

Subject: Unauthorized introduction of exotic magur (*Clarias gariepinus*) -  
controlling measures-reg.

Sir,

I am directed to refer to this Ministry's letters No. 31016/1/1996-Fy (3) dated 19<sup>th</sup> December, 1997, No. 33035/5/1998-Fy (2) dated 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2000 and No. 35035/6/2000-Fy (2) dated 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2002 and 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2013 requesting all State Governments and UTs to take immediate actions against the unauthorized culture of exotic magur (*Clarias gariepinus*).

In this regard, it may be stated that a Judgment Order passed by the NGT, Delhi, Principal Bench on the O.A. No.435 of 2018 with O.A. No.466 of 2018, O.A. No. 494 of 2018 and O.A. No.381 of 2018. The gist of the judgment reads as follows:

"There is no dispute whatsoever, that the breeding of Indian catfish i.e. *Clarias batrachus* is allowed in our country and breeding of exotic catfish i.e. *Clarias gariepinus* (Thai Magur) and its hybrids is banned in all the States and the Union Territories. In the facts and circumstances, we direct as follows:-

- (1) The breeding and culturing of exotic cat fish or its hybrids (Thai Magur etc.) i.e. *Clarias gariepinus* is prohibited in all the States and the Union Territories. The existing stock will be destroyed forthwith. For this purpose concerned District Collectors/ District Commissioners will take necessary action by forming inspection teams of officials of the fisheries Department for inspection of fish ponds and proper identification of prohibited *Clarias gariepinus* i.e. Thai Magur which are being reared and to destroy such stocks forthwith.
- (2) All the cat fish breeders shall be required to source their fish from State Fisheries Department or from the agencies which are authorized by the Department for this purpose.
- (3) Compliance report of this order shall be filed by the Directors of Fisheries Department of all the States and Union Territories within a period of one month.

A copy of the judgment is enclosed herewith with a request to take necessary action for ensuring strict compliance of said judgment on ban on culture of exotic magur (*Clarias gariepinus*) at your end.

Encl.: As above P-29-37/c

Yours faithfully,

(Dr. P. Paul Pandian)

Fisheries Development Commissioner

Copy to:

1. Commissioner/Director of Fisheries, All Coastal States and UTs.
2. Deputy Director General (Fisheries), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), New Delhi.

*M. Mahendrakumar Dhirajjal*  
20/2/19  
Fofandi Mahendrakumar Dhirajjal  
Central Public Information Officer (CPIO)  
Government of India  
Min. of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying  
Department of Fisheries  
Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi-110001



Dr. Y.S. Yadava  
Fisheries Development Commissioner

Tel : 3386379  
Fax : (011)3384030

मानवत सरकार  
कृषि मंत्रालय  
पशुपालन एवं डेयरी विभाग  
कृषि भवन, नई दिल्ली-110001

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE  
(Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairies)  
Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi - 110001

25 copies  
F.No. 31035/25/98-FY(3)

11385

Dated the 20th July, 1998.

To  
The Secretary (Fisheries)  
Government of

D. F	Add. DF	A. O.	A. A.
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Subject:-Unauthorised introduction of exotic red piranha and other members of subfamily, Serrasalminae in the country - controlling measures regarding.

Sir,

It has been brought to our knowledge that exotic predatory fish - red piranha (*Pygocentrus nattereri*) and other members of sub-family, Serrasalminae have found access to the country through clandestine introduction for aquarium purposes, particularly in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Piranhas are voracious predators and can pose threat to the endemic species if they gain entry in open waters. Further, if they breed in natural waters, they can gradually establish in our waters ultimately leading into a major ecological disaster. In view of this, it is requested that there should be a vigil on trade, breeding and any further spread of such exotic fish species introduced surreptitiously by interested parties.

2. It is requested that necessary action may please be taken immediately in the matter to destroy the species, if reported from your State and also to check such introduction, in future.

Yours faithfully,

( Y.S. Yadava )  
Fisheries Development Commissioner

Contd.....2

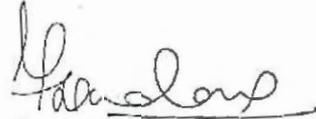
- 2 -

Copy for information and necessary action to:

- ✓ 1. Director/Commissioner of Fisheries, Government of Kerala,  
Thiruvananthapuram

Copy also for information to:

2. All Members of the National Committee on 'Introduction of Exotic Aquatic Species in Indian Waters'.
3. The Director, National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources, Lucknow for information w.r.t. their letter No.G/Exo/98-663 dated 18.5.98.



( Y.S. Yadava )

Fisheries Development Commissioner



सत्यमेव जयते

मत्स्यपालन विभाग भारत सरकार

DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



NATIONAL  
FISHERIES  
DEVELOPMENT  
BOARD

एन एफ डी बी  
NFDB

## National Fisheries Development Board

Department of Fisheries

Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying

Government of India

Fish Building Pillar No:235, PVNR Expressway

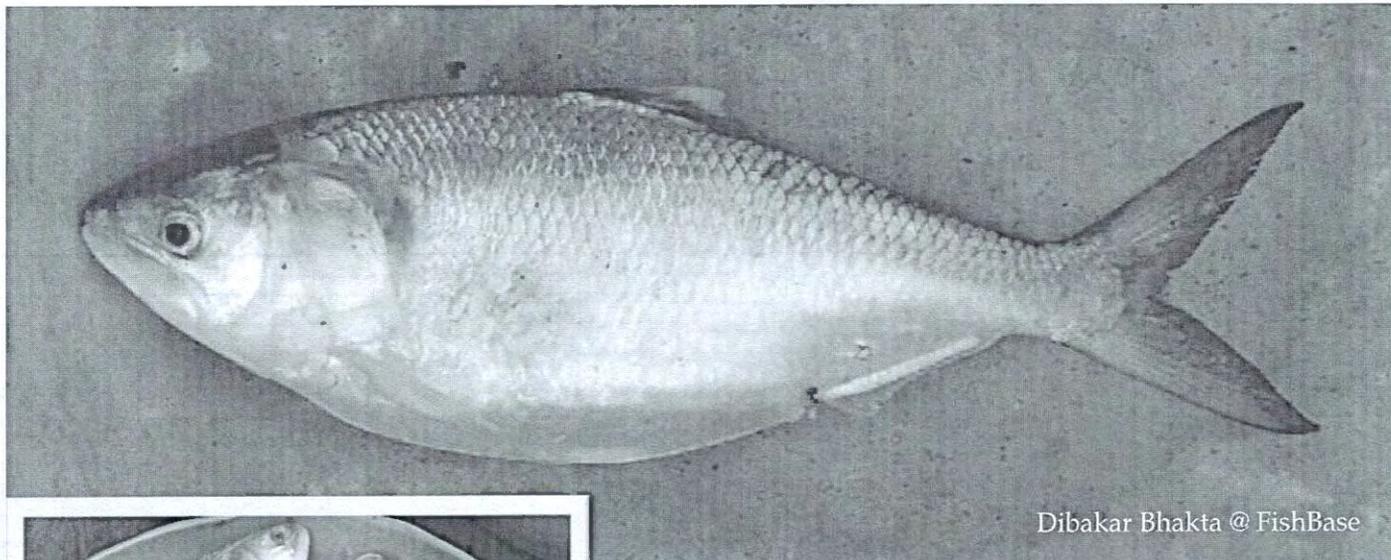
SVPNPA Post, Hyderabad-500052

Web:nfdb.gov.in, Tel: + 91 - 040 - 24000201/177

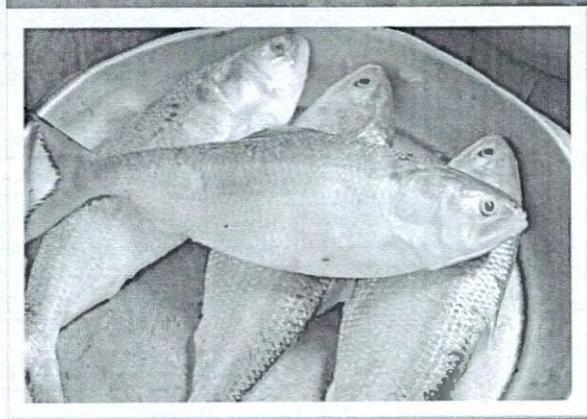


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Uttar Pradesh, State fish of	[44]
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Dibakar Bhakta @ FishBase



## State Fish of West Bengal

**Common names:** Hilsa shad, Hilsa herring

**Scientific name:** *Tenualosa ilisha*

**Vernacular names:** Hilsa, Ilish, Pulasa, Pallo machi

**Habitat:** Normally schools in coastal waters and ascends rivers during southwest monsoon to breed and spawn. Hilsa far up the Ganges and other large rivers seem to be permanent river populations.

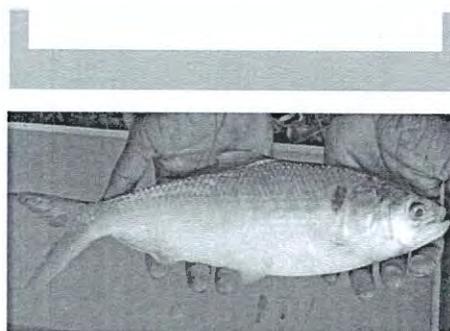
**Distribution:** Distributed in India (Rupnarayan, Hooghly, Mahanadi, Narmada and Godavari Rivers and the Chilika Lake), Bangladesh, Myanmar, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand.

**Status in the IUCN red list of threatened species; Assessment year 2013:** Least Concern (LC)

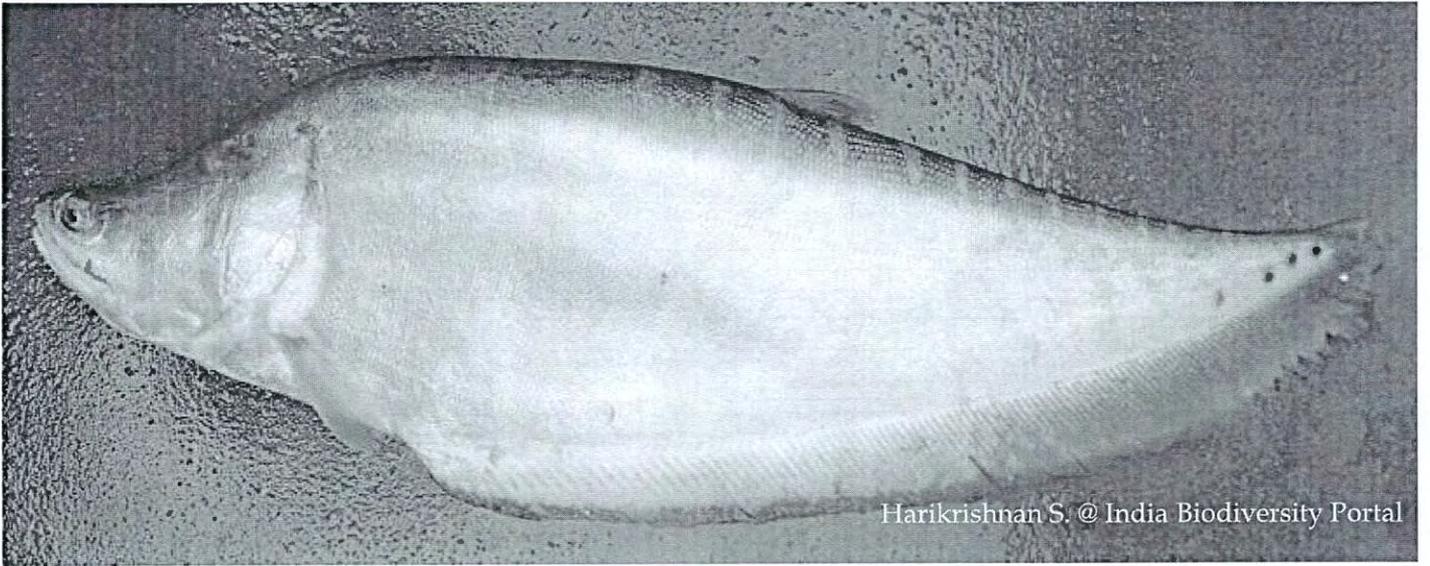
**Conservation efforts:** To aid its conservation, in 2013, the State Fisheries Department notified the stretches of the Hooghly River from Diamond Harbour to Nischhindapur, Katwa to Hooghly Ghat, and Lalbagh to Farakka Barrage along with 5 square kilometre area around the sand bars in Matla, Raimangal and Thakuran Rivers in the

Sunderbans as '*Hilsa sanctuaries*'. Notable success has been achieved in artificial fertilization and seed production of Hilsa in India. In West Bengal and in Bangladesh, the fish is known as 'queen of fishes' and has great cultural importance.

Hilsa contains high amount of n-3 fatty acids. The taste of Hilsa comes primarily from the oil in its fatty belly.



@ ICAR-CIBA



## State Fish of Uttar Pradesh

**Common names:** Indian knifefish, Indian featherback, Humped featherback

**Scientific name:** *Chitala chitala*

**Vernacular names:** Chital, Chitol, Moi, Sitawl

**Habitat:** Inhabits large rivers, lakes, reservoirs, stagnant backwaters and confined water bodies. They generally inhabit well oxygenated riverine water, but can live for an indefinite period in the confined water (less than 0.5 ppm of dissolved oxygen) aided by swim bladder modification, which functions as an accessory respiratory organ.

**Distribution:** Distributed in India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan, mainly in the Brahmaputra, Indus, Ganges and Mahanadi River basins

**Status in the IUCN red list of threatened species; Assessment year 2010:** Near Threatened (NT)

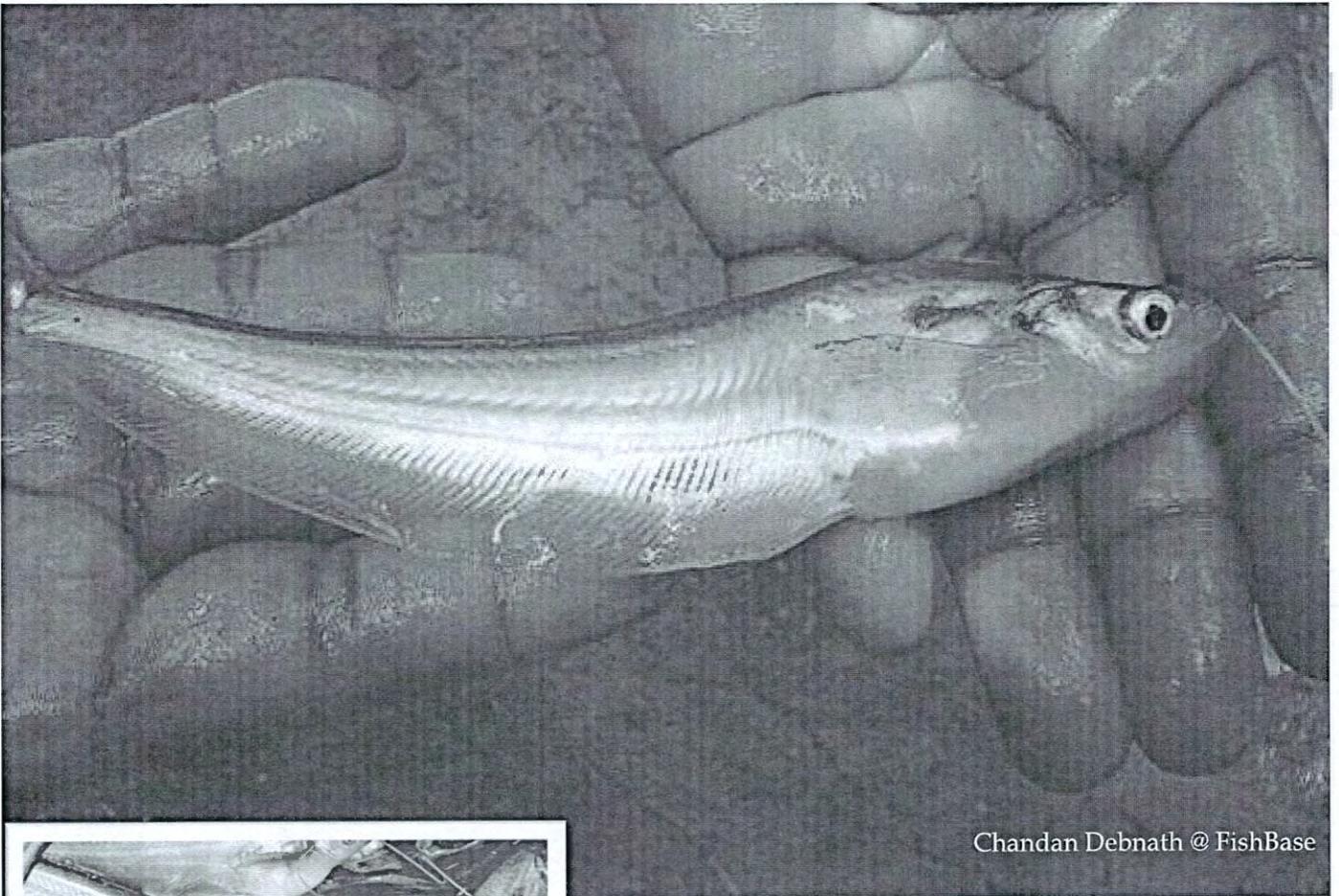
**Conservation efforts:** Chital fish was evaluated in the NBFGR-NATP Workshop and has been listed as a prioritized fish as food, sport, aquarium and highly priced cultivable fish. The workshop proposed it as State fish for Uttar Pradesh. A special cover featuring the fish along with

other aquatic animals of Uttar Pradesh was released in 2022 by the Department of Post, India. Recently, ICAR-NBFGR joined hands with the Department of Fisheries, Uttar Pradesh to facilitate stocking of *C. chitala* in the State's rivers.

The common name 'Indian featherback' derived owing to the presence of a long anal fin, which continues with the caudal fin giving an appearance of a feather.



Special cover released by the Department of Post, India



Chandan Debnath @ FishBase



@ ICAR-CIFA

## State Fish of Tripura

**Common name:** Indian butter catfish

**Scientific name:** *Ompok bimaculatus*

**Vernacular names:** Pabda, Kha babia, Ngaten

**Habitat:** Inhabits plains and sub-montane regions and is found in rivers, streams, creeks, lakes, tanks and ponds

**Distribution:** Distributed in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka

**Status in the IUCN red list of threatened species; Assessment year 2009:** Near Threatened (NT)

**Conservation efforts:** The fish was adopted as the State fish of Tripura as per the proposal of ICAR-NBFGR. The fish faces a risk of 'extinction in the wild' due to habitat deterioration and population over exploitation. Hence the captive breeding technique is being developed. In addition, the fish is a potential candidate species for aquaculture diversification program. Butter catfish has made entry into ornamental fish market as well.

The fish is called 'butter catfish' due to its very soft and delicate flesh. This makes the fish valued for making high quality fish balls.



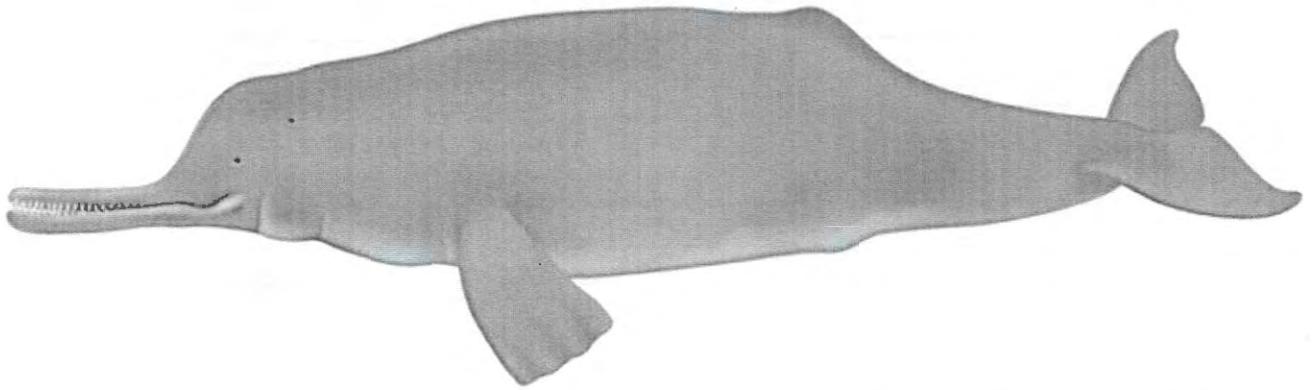


illustration by Uko Gorter @ [www.riverdolphins.org](http://www.riverdolphins.org)

## State Aquatic Animal of Punjab

**Common name:** Indus River dolphin

**Scientific name:** *Platanista minor*

**Vernacular names:** Sindhu Nadi Dolphin, Bhulan Macchi

**Habitat:** Inhabits freshwater inland wetlands

**Distribution:** Endemic to Indus River system of north-western India and Pakistan. Mainly in lower parts of the Indus River in Pakistan and in River Beas, a tributary of the Indus River in Punjab, India

**Status in the IUCN red list of threatened species; Assessment year 2021:** Endangered (EN)

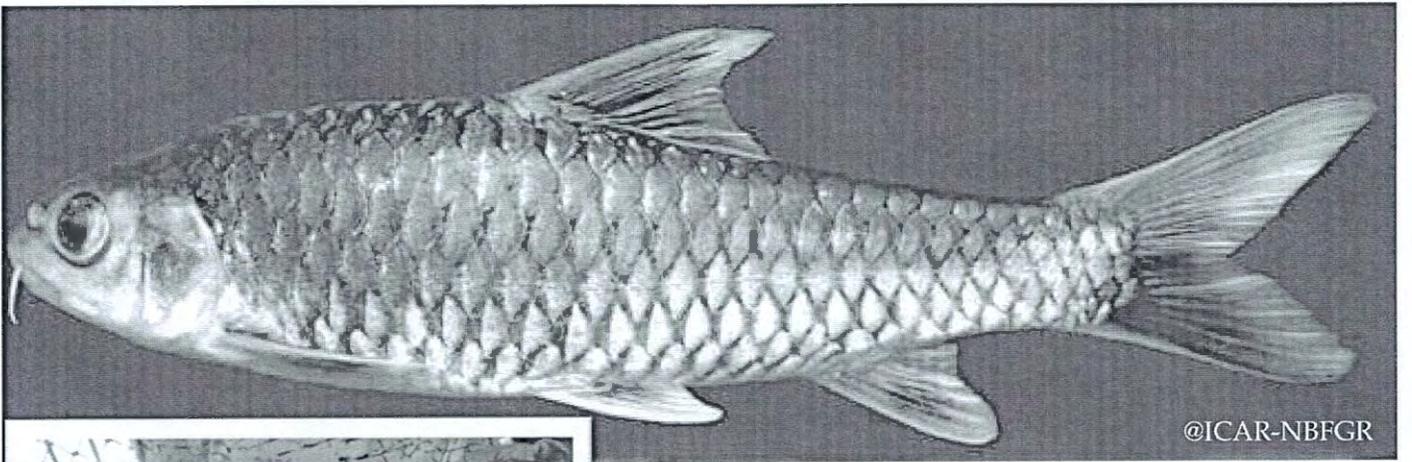
**Conservation efforts:** The Indus River dolphin was declared as the State aquatic animal by the Government of Punjab in 2019. There are merely less than 2000 Indus River dolphins left in the wild. International Freshwater Dolphin Day, observed annually on October 24, aims to raise awareness about river dolphins and their conservation measures. Indus river dolphin is an obligate freshwater mammal. Like that of Ganges River dolphins, they also rely on echolocation to perceive their environment. They have another adaptation to swim on side that enable

them to exist in shallower waters as well, if required.

Though both the Ganges River dolphin and the Indus River dolphin look very similar, more recent genetic studies such as divergence time and skull structure, support them being distinct species rather than sub-species of one species. The main physical distinction between these two is the difference in numbers of their teeth.



@ WWF



@ICAR-NBFGR



Manas Kumar Sinha @ NFDB

## State Fish of Odisha

**Common name:** Mahanadi mahseer

**Scientific name:** *Tor mahanadicus*

**Vernacular name:** Kado

**Habitat:** Rivers and tributaries

**Distribution:** Mahanadi River near Hirakud of Odisha

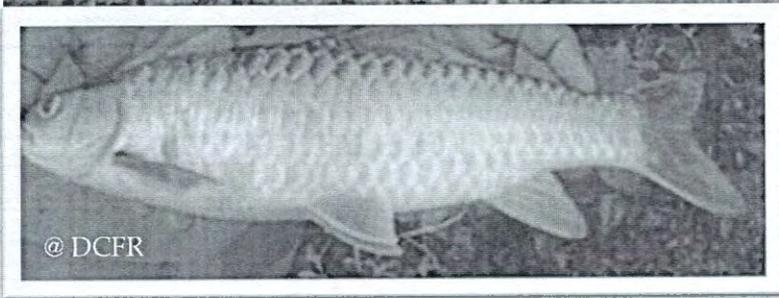
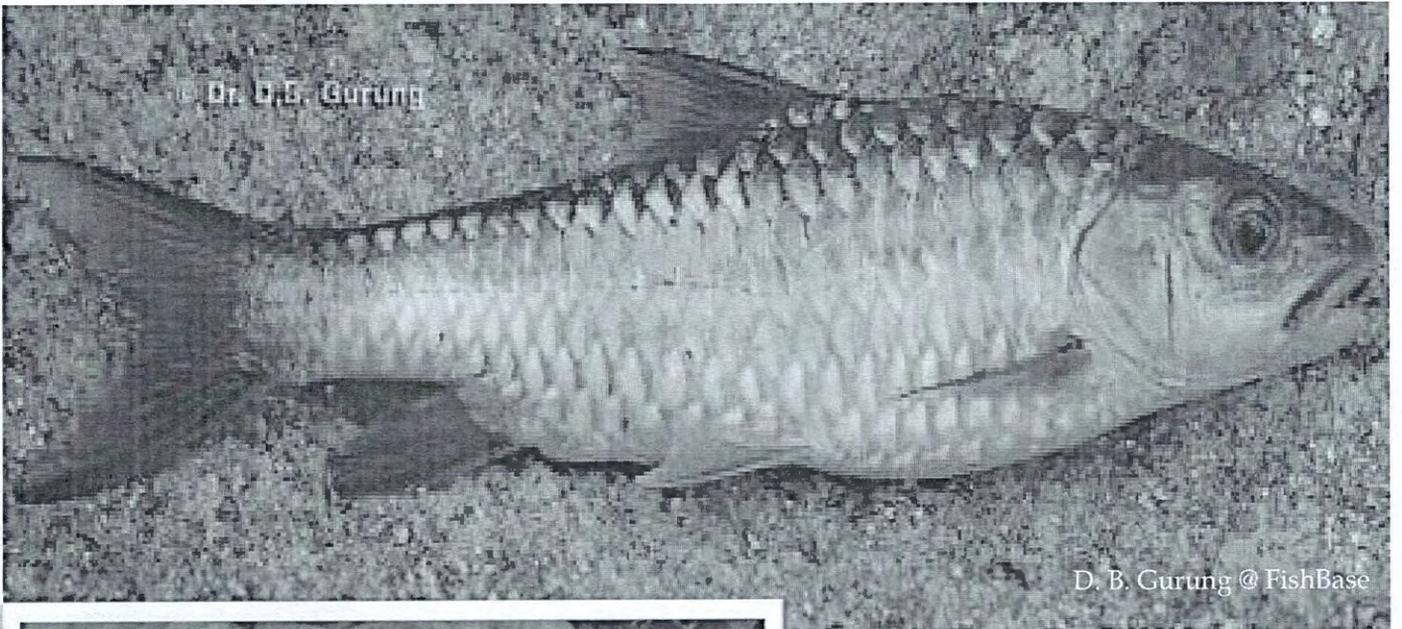
**Status in the IUCN red list of threatened species; Assessment year 2018:** Endangered (EN)

**Conservation efforts:** Mahanadi mahseer was adopted as the State fish of Odisha as per the proposal of ICAR-NBFGR. This commercially important, endangered and endemic fish species is protected along the 1.5 km river stretch around the leaning temple of Humma on the bank of the River Mahanadi, by the village community. The fishers of the village do not fish Mahseer despite its commercial importance due to religious belief. The best season for sighting the fish in Mahanadi River is from Karthik poornima in November till the beginning of monsoon in June.

The taxonomy of *Tor* species is confusing owing to the morphological variations and the habitat adaptations. Several genetic studies have been conducted to resolve this. *T. mahanadicus* is now established as a valid species under the genus *Tor* based on distinct morphological traits and mitochondrial gene sequences.



@ICAR-NBFGR



## State Fish of Nagaland and Sikkim

**Common names:** Copper mahseer, Chocolate mahseer

**Scientific name:** *Neolissochilus hexagonolepis*

**Vernacular names:** Katli, Kha saw, Katley, Boka pithia

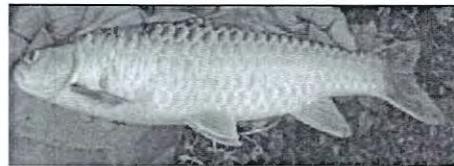
**Habitat:** Inhabits fast flowing streams and rivers with rocky bottom, mainly in the middle of streams.

**Distribution:** Distributed in India (Brahmaputra and Chindwin drainages), Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, China, Bhutan, Pakistan and Vietnam.

**Status in the IUCN red list of threatened species; Assessment year 2009:** Near Threatened (NT)

**Conservation efforts:** The fish was adopted as the State fish of Sikkim as per the original ICAR-NBFGR proposal. This was officially declared by Government of Sikkim in 2021. In 2007, the State of Nagaland also declared the species as State fish. Their population is decreasing due to anthropogenic pressures, pollution, unregulated and destructive fishing methods. Hence, there is a need for special attention and measures to conserve the depleting population of this fish.

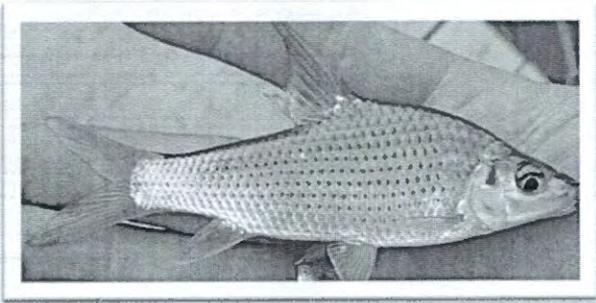
The meat of chocolate mahseer is well flavored, nutritious and highly relished by the people of North-Eastern region of India. Its meat is rich in n-3 poly unsaturated fatty acid (21%) and essential amino acid content.



@ DCFR



Original illustration of Francis Day, 1878



@ NFDB

## State Fish of Mizoram

**Common name:** Burmese kingfish

**Scientific name:** *Semiplotus modestus*

**Vernacular name:** Nghavang

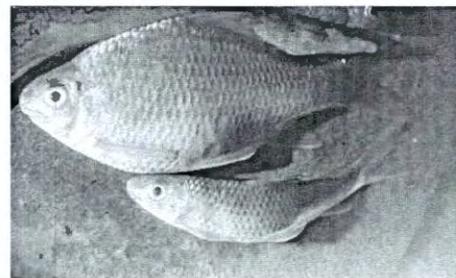
**Habitat:** Inhabits moderate to fast flowing mountain streams and rivers with rocky bed; freshwater; benthopelagic

**Distribution:** Distributed in tropical fresh waters, mainly in India and upper Myanmar

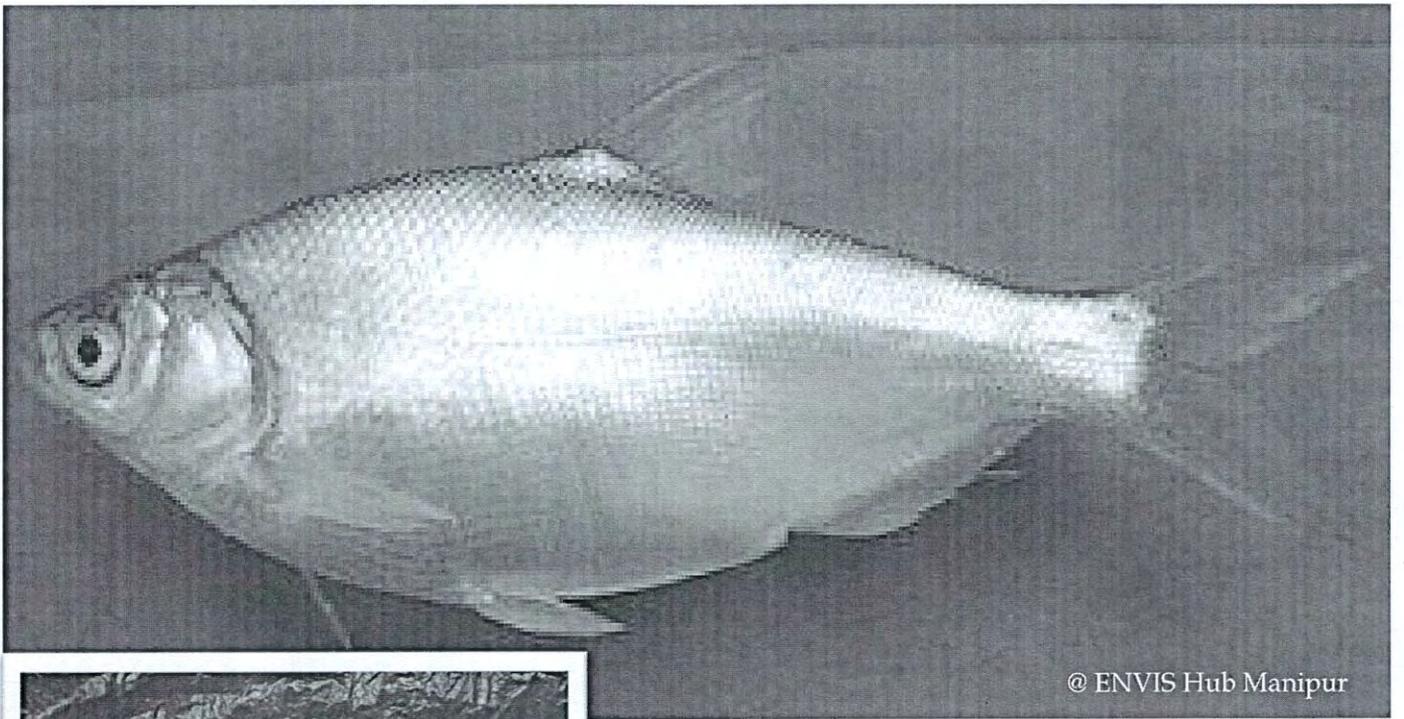
**Status in the IUCN red list of threatened species; Assessment year 2009:** Data Deficient (DD)

**Conservation efforts:** The fish was adopted as the State fish of Mizoram as per the original ICAR-NBFGR proposal. Hill streams, which are the main habitat of the species are now threatened by sedimentation due to deforestation and agricultural practices. Destructive fishing practice like dynamiting and over exploitation also pose threat to the fish's survival. Further research on distribution, biology, habitat and threats are necessary to conserve this species.

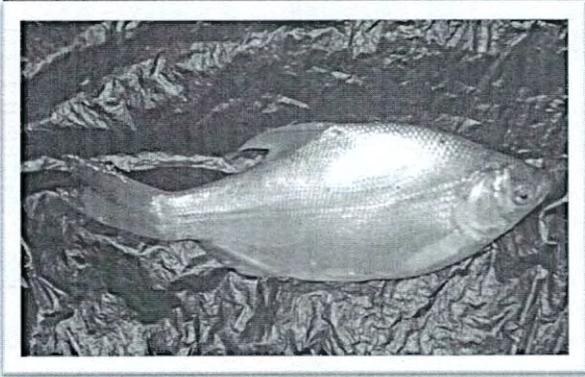
The common name of the fish was given by Francis Day. Day (1870) described *S. modestus* first from Akyab (now Sittwe), Kaladan basin in the then Burma and referred to the fish as 'Burmese Kingfish'.



Lalramzawnchhuaha @ DFDO,  
Siaha-Mizoram



@ ENVIS Hub Manipur



@ e-pao.net

## State Fish of Manipur

**Common names:** Manipur Osteobrama

**Scientific name:** *Osteobrama belangeri*

**Vernacular names:** Pengba, Tharak

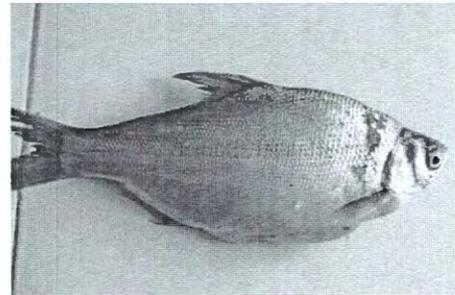
**Habitat:** Inhabits freshwater wetland

**Distribution:** Endemic to the eastern part of Manipur, Myanmar and Yunnan province of China

**Status in the IUCN red list of threatened species; Assessment year 2010:** Near Threatened (NT)

**Conservation efforts:** Pengba was adopted as the State fish of Manipur as per the original ICAR-NBFGR proposal. In India, the fish has almost disappeared from the Loktak Lake and other water bodies of the central plain of Manipur and is considered 'regionally extinct in the wild'. To rejuvenate the fishery, ICAR-CIFRI along with the State Fisheries Department, has initiated its cage culture in Takmu water-body at Sendra under Bishnupur district, Manipur. In 2022, a mega ranching programme of Pengba was also conducted in Loktak Lake, Manipur.

The fish is named in honour of the botanist and explorer, Charles Paulus Bélanger (1805-1881), who collected the 'type' specimen.



@ my GOV



## State Fish of Maharashtra

**Common names:** Silver pomfret, White pomfret

**Scientific name:** *Pampus candidus* (Originally described as *Stromateus candidus* from Indian waters, and later synonymized with *P. argenteus*.)

**Vernacular names:** Silver paplet, Vellai vaval, Tella chanduva, Velutha aavoli

**Habitat:** Inhabits shallow to deep coastal waters and muddy bottoms. Mesopelagic detritus feeder.

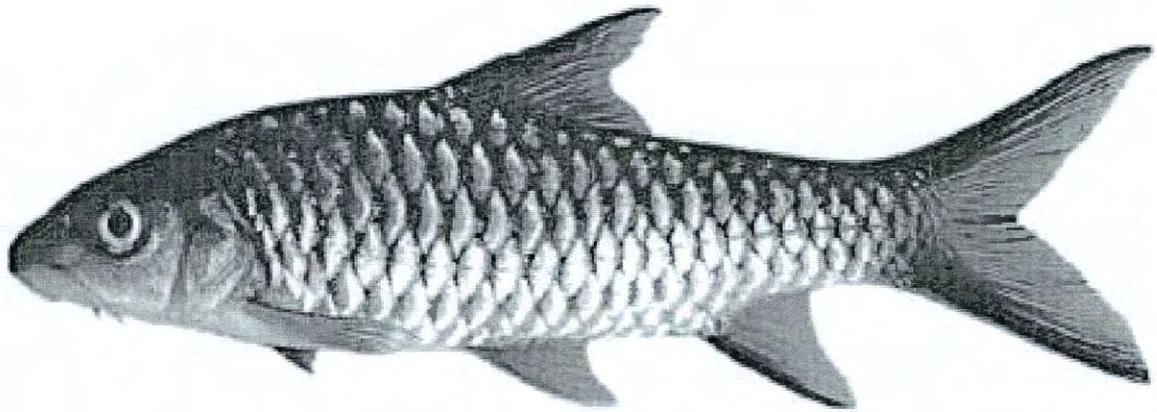
**Distribution:** Arabian Sea extends up to Persian Gulf and Bay of Bengal

 **Status in the IUCN red list of threatened species; Assessment year 2014:** Vulnerable (VU) for *P. argenteus*

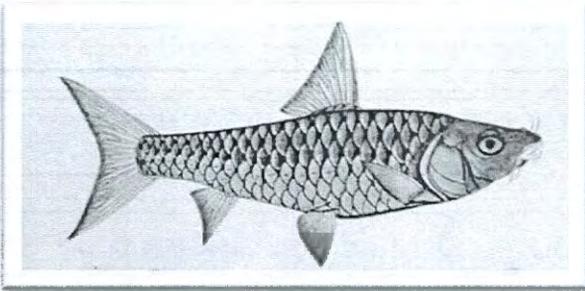
**Conservation efforts:** On September 4, 2023, the Minister for Forests, Cultural Affairs and Fisheries, Government of Maharashtra announced that the 'Silver pomfret' will be recognized as the State fish of Maharashtra. Considering its importance, the fish was featured along with Hilsa, and Prawn in a definitive stamp for everyday postal needs released by the Department of Post, India in 1979 and 1982. In 2022, Maharashtra Postal Circle released a customised special cover on silver

pomfret to honor the fish's contribution to the local economy and seafood culture. Nowadays, the wild stock of silver pomfret is under threat mainly due to over-fishing and ecological alterations like changes in salinity and nutrients status, reduction in freshwater inflow to the river due to drought and other influential factors etc. Declaration of Silver pomfret as the State Fish of Maharashtra will boost the activities maintaining the balance of the marine environment, besides protecting the habitat of this fish species.

In addition to being a popular food fish, silver pomfret is also used in Chinese medicine.



Fisheries department, Madhya Pradesh



Original illustration by Haludar 1822

## State Fish of Madhya Pradesh

**Common names:** Tor mahseer, Narmada mahseer, Red-fin mahseer, Deep bodied mahseer

**Scientific name:** *Tor tor*

**Vernacular names:** Mahseer baudas, Turiya mahseer

**Habitat:** Inhabits rapid streams with rocky bottom, rivers and lakes. Grow better in a river with a rocky bottom.

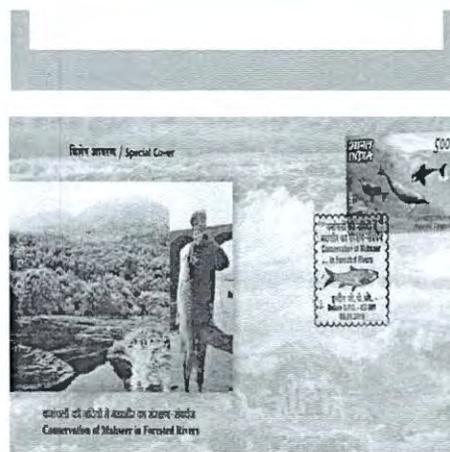
**Distribution:** Distributed in India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan

**Status in the IUCN red list of threatened species; Assessment year 2018:** Data Deficient (DD)

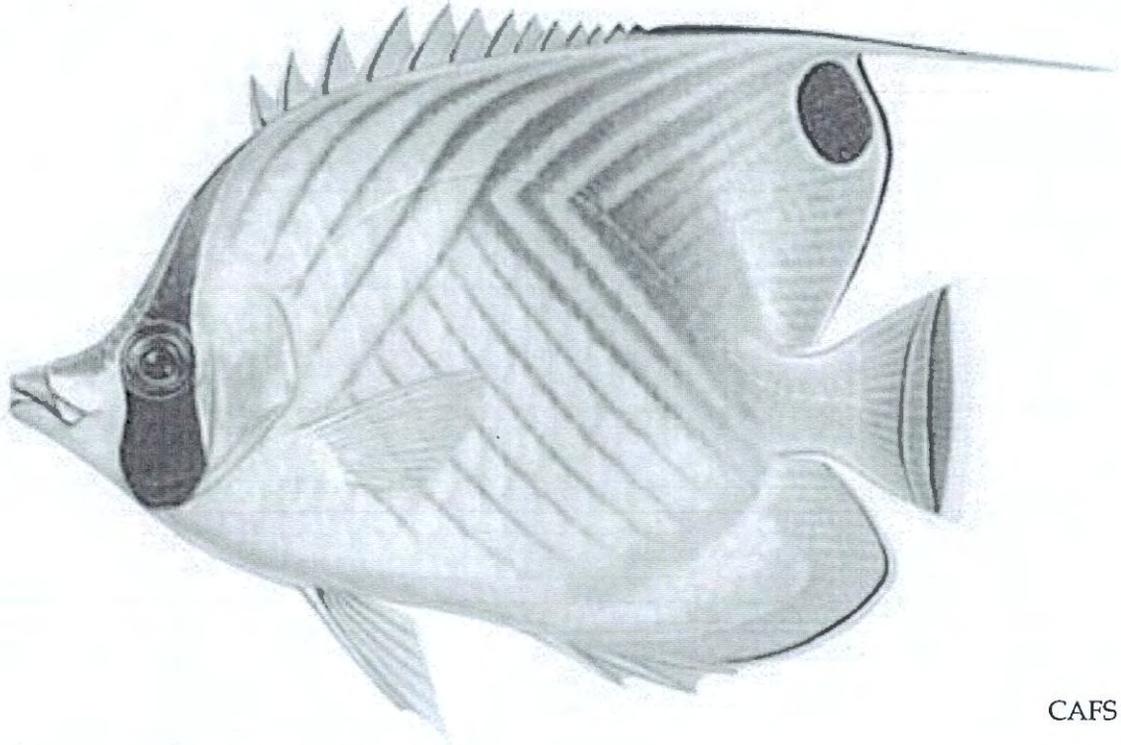
**Conservation efforts:** The fish was declared as the State fish by the Government of Madhya Pradesh in 2011. In 2016, the Department of Post, India in coordination with the Forest Department, Madhya Pradesh released a Special Cover to commemorate conservation of mahseer in forested rivers. In the same year, the Forest Department, Madhya Pradesh began identifying the occurrence of the fish and started mapping them in protected areas, using GIS technology. *T. tor* is assessed as 'DD' due to confusion regarding its exact taxonomic identity and distribution which accounts for

further research in developing conservation strategies.

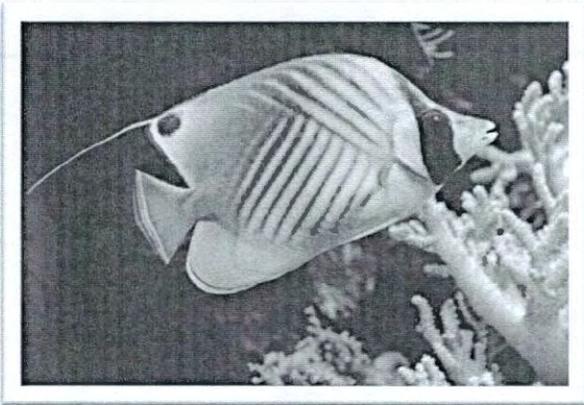
*T. tor* was first described by Hamilton (1822) from Mahananda, a tributary of the Ganges flowing through North-East Bengal.



Special cover released by the Department of Post, India



CAFS @ FishBase



Holger Krisp @ Wikimedia Commons

## State Animal of Lakshadweep

**Common name:** Threadfin butterflyfish

**Scientific name:** *Chaetodon auriga*

**Vernacular name:** Fakkikadiya

**Habitat:** Inhabits a wide variety of coral reef habitat and can be encountered in coastal, lagoonal and outer reefs.

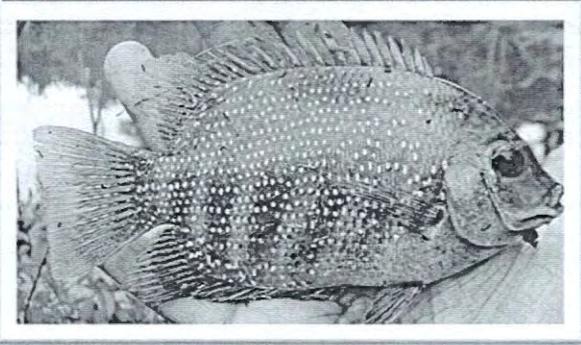
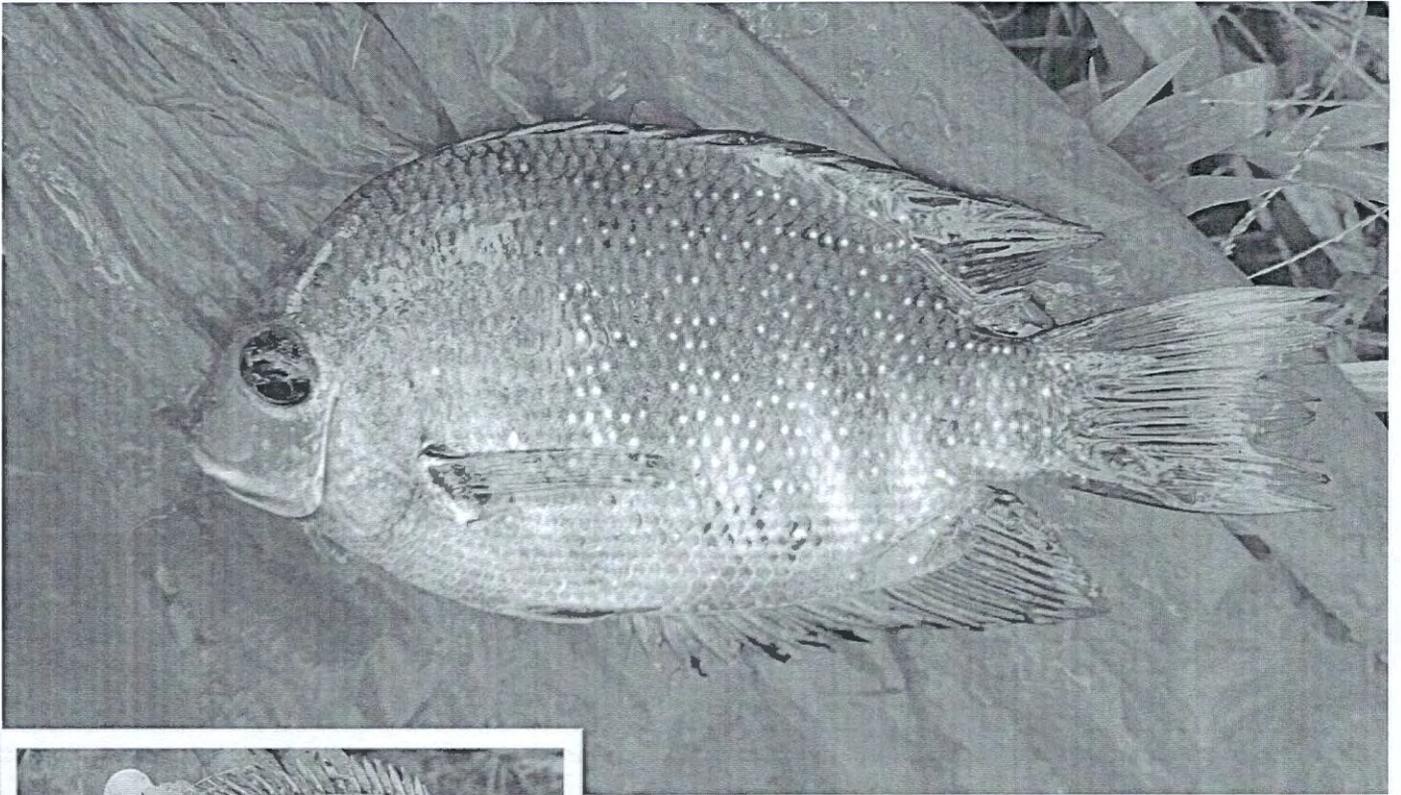
**Distribution:** Distributed in the waters of the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea and the Pacific to Hawaii.

**Status in the IUCN red list of threatened species; Assessment year 2009:** Least Concern (LC)

**Interesting facts:** Lakshadweep has declared Threadfin butterflyfish as its State animal owing to its importance. The fish is featured in the official seal of Lakshadweep in pair, flanking Ashoka Chakra crested by a palm-tree; below which a banner in the colors of Indian flag. It is one of the most sought-after fish for marine aquarium. Its common name comes from the distinctive threadlike extension that hangs off the rear end of dorsal fin of the adult fish.

Threadfin butterflyfish are dependent on coral reefs to obtain much of their food. Hence, the fish may be used as a bio-indicator in order to monitor coral reef ecosystems.





Sajan Sajeevan @ FishBase

## State Fish of Kerala

**Common names:** Pearlsport, Green chromide

**Scientific name:** *Eetroplus suratensis*

**Vernacular names:** Karimeen, Kalundar, Kundal

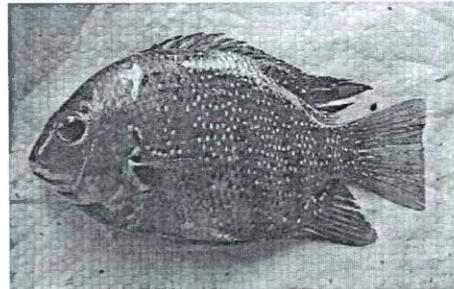
**Habitat:** Inhabits riverine estuaries, coastal lagoons and in natural and man-made freshwater habitats

**Distribution:** Endemic to peninsular India (mainly in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka) and Sri Lanka

**Status in the IUCN red list of threatened species; Assessment year 2019:** Least Concern (LC)

**Interesting facts:** The fish was adopted as the State fish of Kerala as per the original ICAR-NBFGR proposal. In 2010, the Government of Kerala officially declared pearlsport as the State fish of Kerala. The same year i.e., 2010-11 was observed as the 'Year of the Karimeen' by the State Fisheries Department of Kerala along with the promotion of Pearlsport farming through the 'Matsya Kerala Programme'. The fish is a euryhaline species and is the largest among all Indian cichlids. It is a high valued delicacy in Kerala.

Pearlsport has an elliptical greyish green body with dark bands and shiny white diamond like spots all over the body, from which its common name derived.



Akhilesh @ FishBase



N. Basavaraja @ FishBase



N. Basavaraja @ FishBase

## State Fish of Karnataka

**Common names:** Carnatic carp, Cauvery carp

**Scientific name:** *Barbodes carnaticus* (previously recorded as *Puntius carnaticus*)

**Vernacular names:** Kaveri kendai, Kaverimeenu, Pachilavetti

**Habitat:** Inhabits large pools and riffles of rapid rivers and streams

**Distribution:** Endemic to Western Ghats region of Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu in India

**Status in the IUCN red list of threatened species; Assessment year 2010:** Least Concern (LC)

**Conservation efforts:** The fish was proposed as the State fish of Karnataka by ICAR-NBFGR. The previously used scientific name of the fish i.e. *Puntius carnaticus* is now considered as a non-valid senior synonym. Owing to the fish's importance, Department of Post, Government of India released a stamp and an envelope on this endemic fish species in 2020. The colour of the fish varies from golden brown to purple-brown. Carnatic carp is an excellent candidate for freshwater aquaculture

owing to its higher growth rate in the first year of its life span and other favourable characteristics. The breeding technology of the fish has already been standardised by ICAR-CIFA. It is a valued table fish and a popular sport fish among fish anglers.

Cauvery carp superficially resembles and hence is frequently confused by recreational anglers as the highly prized mahseers.

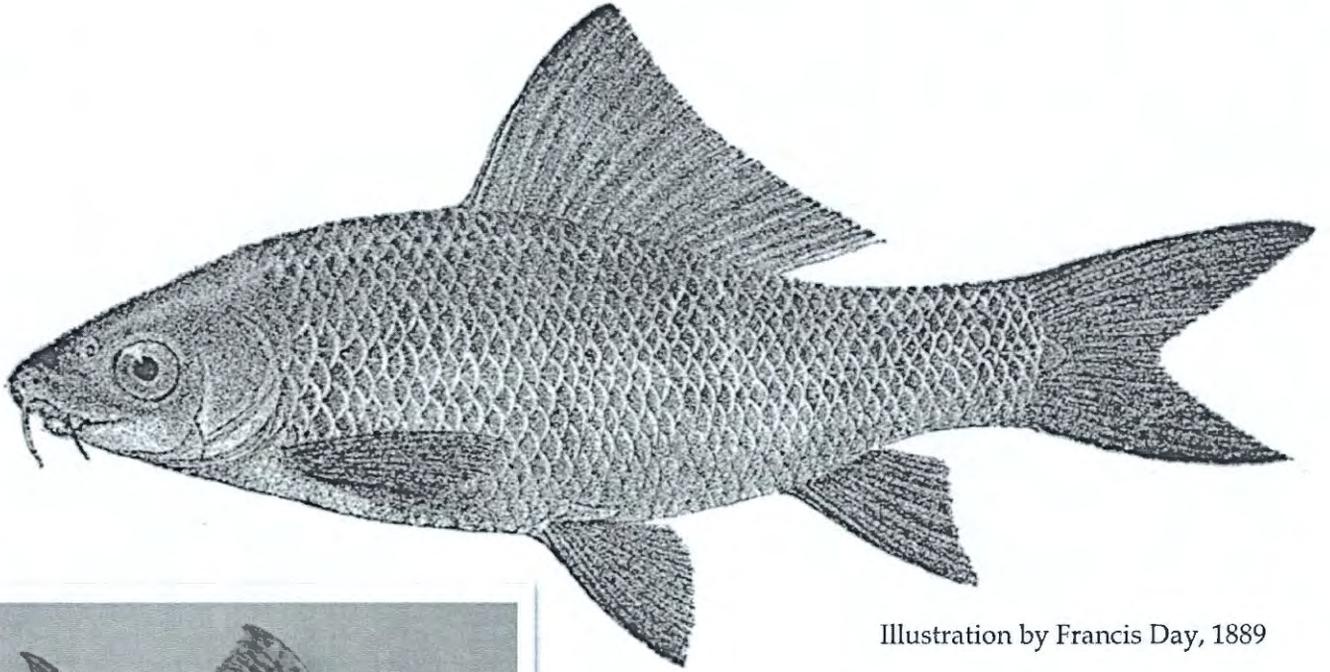
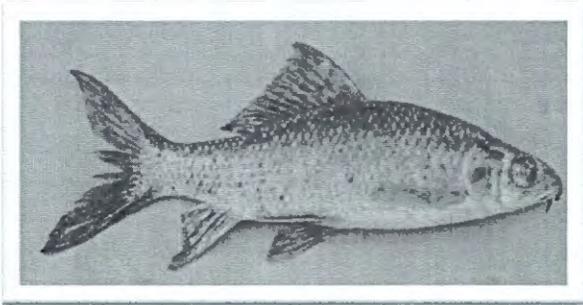


Illustration by Francis Day, 1889



Mohammad Moazzam Khan @ FishBase

## State Fish of Haryana

**Common names:** Orangefin labeo, Karnataka labeo, Black rohu

**Scientific name:** *Labeo calbasu*

**Vernacular names:** Kalbasu, Kurcha

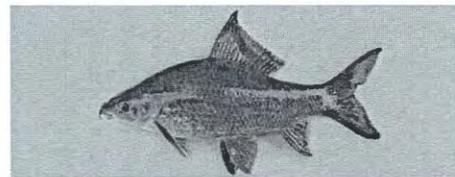
**Habitat:** Inhabits ponds and slow-moving waters of rivers

**Distribution:** Distributed in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand

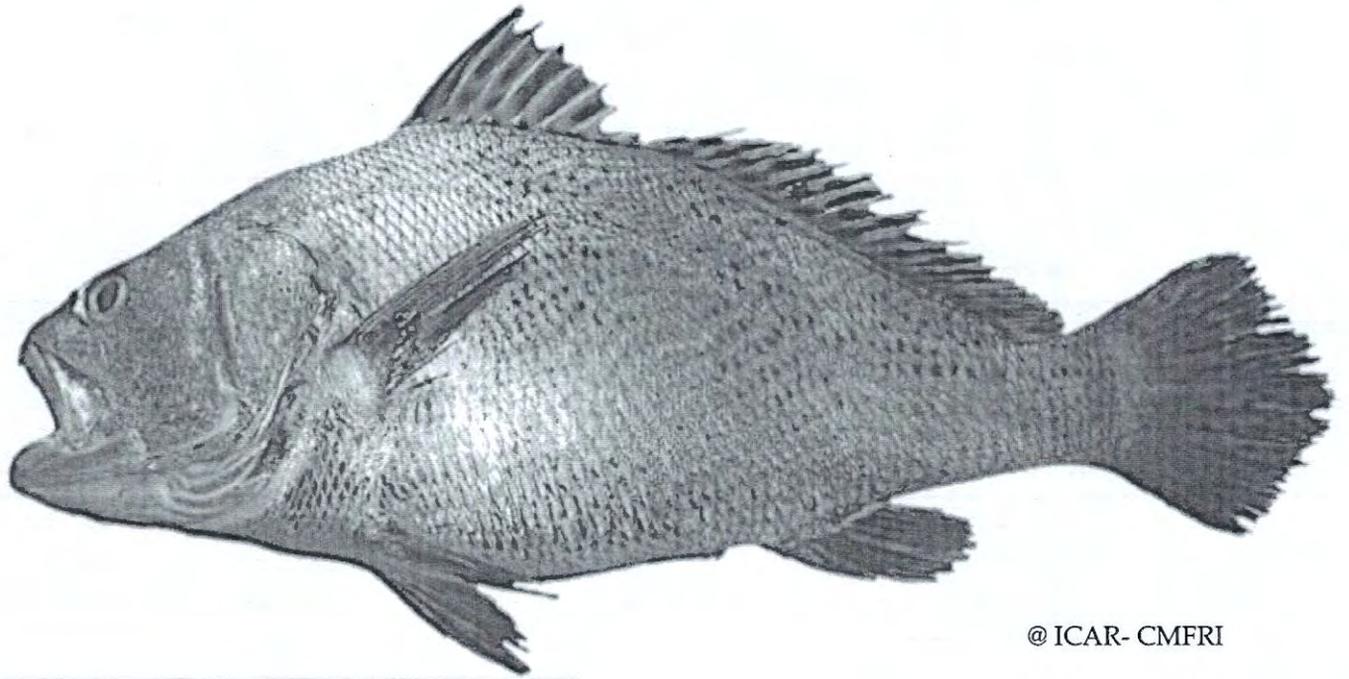
**Status in the IUCN red list of threatened species; Assessment year 2010:** Least Concern (LC)

**Interesting facts:** The fish was adopted as the State fish of Haryana as per the original ICAR-NBFGR proposal. It has recently expanded its presence into ornamental fish market also. The fish is dorsally dark brown-black and ventrally lighter in colour. In India, it has been documented as 'Lower Risk near Threatened'. The existing populations of *L. calbasu* can be protected by reducing the pressure on brood fishes from natural sources.

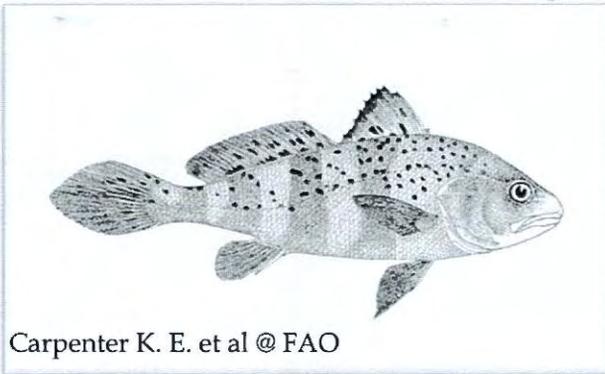
It is the most important carp species next to *L. rohita*, *L. catla* and *Cirrhinus mrigala*. It is a popular food fish as well as a game fish.



Balaram Mahalder @ FishBase



@ ICAR- CMFRI



Carpenter K. E. et al @ FAO

## State Fish of Gujarat

**Common names:** Black Jewfish, Blackspotted croacker

**Scientific name:** *Protonibea diacanthus*

**Vernacular names:** Ghol, Goli, Telia, Cherukora, Palli kora, Varayn kora, Pulli panna, Poma

**Habitat:** Marine neretic; Inhabits coastal muddy waters, off sea beds. It ascends tidal rivers and estuaries.

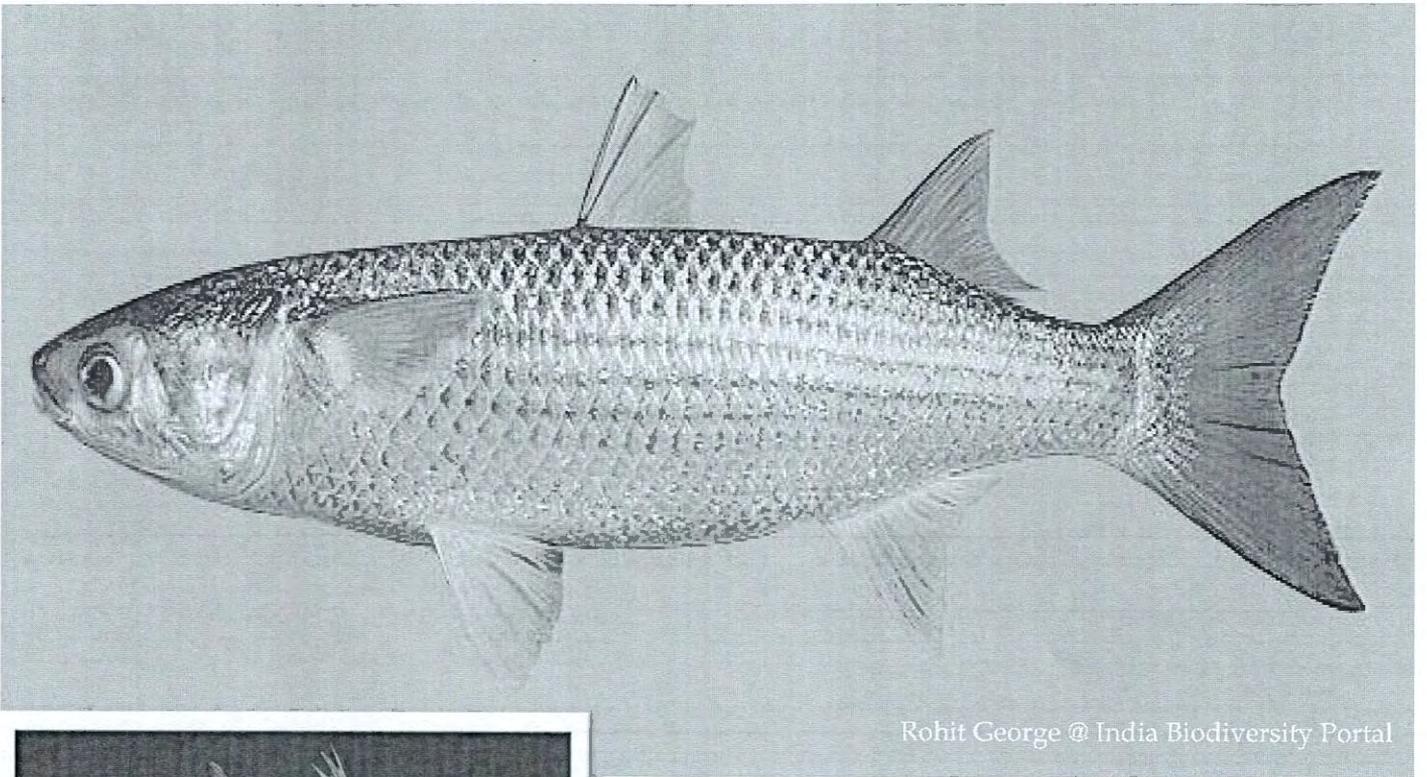
**Distribution:** Distributed in the Indo-West Pacific, west coast of the Persian Gulf and along the coasts of India and Sri Lanka, north to Japan and south through the Philippines and Borneo to New Guinea and northern Australia. It forms a lucrative 'ghol-kothi' fishery along the north-west coast of India, off Maharashtra and Gujarat.

**Status in the IUCN red list of threatened species; Assessment year 2018:** Near Threatened (NT)

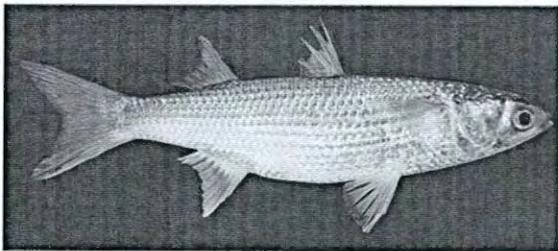
**Interesting facts:** Blackspotted croacker was chosen as the State fish of Gujarat owing to its uniqueness and economic value and to boost its conservation measures. The species was declared as the State fish of Gujarat during the two-day Global Fisheries Conference India 2023 (November 21-22, 2023) in Ahmedabad. The fish is caught with bottom trawls and bottom set gill nets.

It is consumed fresh and dried and is targeted for its swim bladders. The dried swim bladder (fish maws) is highly priced because of its medicinal and commercial values. It is exported to countries of south-east Asia, such as Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia, where it is used to prepare 'isinglass', a form of collagen used mainly for the clarification of wine and beer in beverage industry and as traditional medicine and cosmetics for women.

The fish is also known as 'fishermen's lottery/ sea gold' owing to its high market value.



Rohit George @ India Biodiversity Portal



Randall J.E. @ FishBase

## State Fish of Goa

**Common names:** Striped grey mullet, Flathead mullet

**Scientific name:** *Mugil cephalus*

**Vernacular names:** Shevtto, Ain, Thirutha, Madava

**Habitat:** Inhabits wetlands (inland), marine neritic and marine coastal/supra-tidal waters.

**Distribution:** Cosmopolitan in coastal waters of the tropical, subtropical and temperate zones of all seas

**Status in the IUCN red list of threatened species; Assessment year 2018:** Least Concern (LC)

**Interesting facts:** The species was chosen as the State fish of Goa owing to its popularity amongst Goans. The State fish was declared by an official Gazette dated 2015 on the occasion of *Aqua Goa Mega Fish Festival 2016*. The fish is caught year-round using diverse fishing crafts and gears like Rampon, Katalli, Khuttanni, simple net, fishing rods etc. Its roe and gizzards are also prized delicacies, in addition to its meat.

Striped grey mullet is an ecologically important link in the energy flow within estuarine and marine communities. This fish removes detritus and microalgae by sucking up the top layer of sediments while feeding. The thick-walled gizzard-like segments in their stomach along with a long gastrointestinal tract enable them to feed on detritus.



Lai N. W. © FishBase



Sullip Kumar Majhi et al. © MethodsX

## State Fish of Bihar

**Common name:** Indian walking catfish

**Scientific name:** *Clarias magur*

(previously recorded as *C. batrachus*)

**Vernacular names:** Magur, Mangur, Murgodu

**Habitat:** Inhabit lowland streams, swamps, ponds, ditches, paddy fields and pools left in low spots after rivers have been in flood and is usually confined to stagnant, muddy water. The fish can survive both in water and land habitats.

**Distribution:** Distributed in India and Bangladesh

**Status in the IUCN red list of threatened species; Assessment year 2010:** Endangered (EN)

**Conservation efforts:** The fish was adopted as the State fish of Bihar in the original ICAR-NBFGR list and the scientific name of the fish used then was *Clarias batrachus*. However, the latest scientific reports noted that the true *C. batrachus* ('Least concern' as per IUCN Red List) is confined to Java and Indonesia and it is *C. magur* which are seen in north eastern India and was previously misidentified as *C.*

*batrachus*. Recently, ICAR-NBFGR in collaboration with ICAR-CIFA, Anand Agricultural University and ICAR-IASRI decoded the complete genome of Indian walking catfish.

*C. magur* is differentiated genetically and phenotypically from *C. batrachus* based on the former's deeply serrated pectoral spine and the difference in their head shape.





## State Fish of Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand

**Common names:** Golden mahseer, Himalayan mahseer, Putitor mahseer, King mahseer

**Scientific name:** *Tor putitora*

**Vernacular names:** Mahseer chiniaru, Junga pithia

**Habitat:** Inhabits deep stretches of rivers and mountain pools having fast moving water. Adult fish inhabit foothill rivers and migrate upstream in monsoon to reach suitable spawning grounds.

**Distribution:** Distributed in India (Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Sikkim, Tripura, Meghalaya, Mizoram & Manipur), Myanmar, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal.

**Status in the IUCN red list of threatened species; Assessment year 2018:** Endangered (EN)

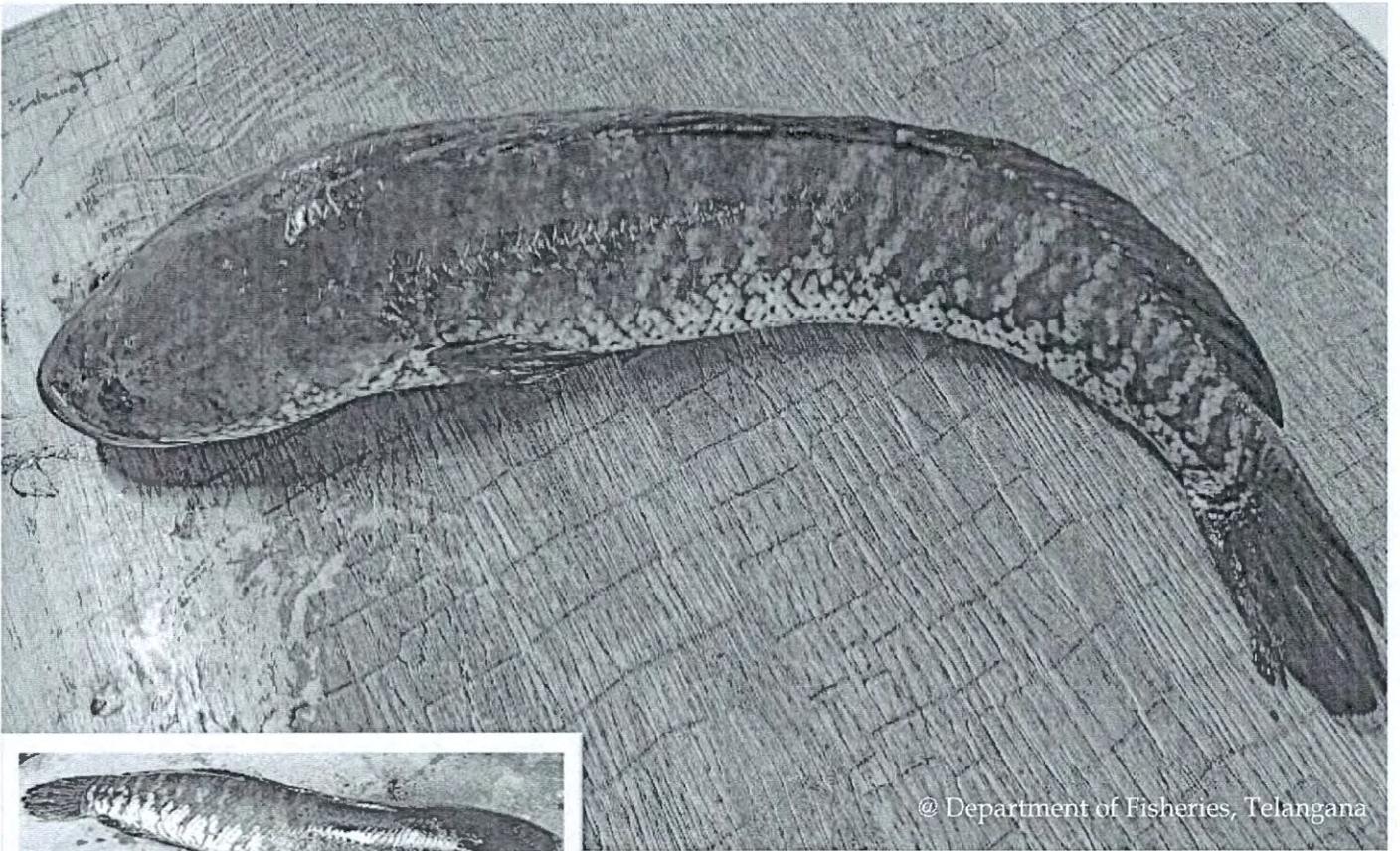
**Conservation efforts:** Golden mahseer was adopted as the State fish of Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand in the original ICAR-NBFGR list. The fish's survival is dependent on the preservation of habitat connectivity and adequate

water flow. Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh have many temple fish sanctuaries. Notably the *Baijanath temple complex* on the banks of River Gomti in Uttarakhand conserves golden mahseer and supports a small fish sanctuary on its banks.



Golden mahseer is called as 'tiger of water/ rivers', for its vigour, golden colour and athletic abilities.





Harikrishnan S @ India Biodiversity Portal

## State Fish of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana

**Common names:** Striped murrel, Striped snakehead, Common snakehead

**Scientific name:** *Channa striata*

**Vernacular names:** Korrameenu, Korramatta, Morul, Varal, Viraal

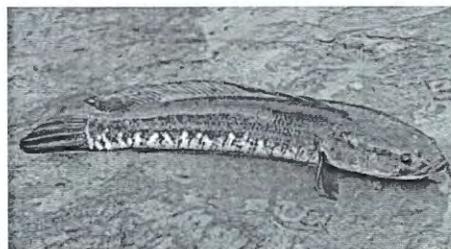
**Habitat:** Inhabits ponds, streams and rivers, preferring stagnant and muddy water of plains. Survive both in freshwater and brackish water environment.

**Distribution:** Distributed mainly in Asia: Pakistan to Thailand and South China

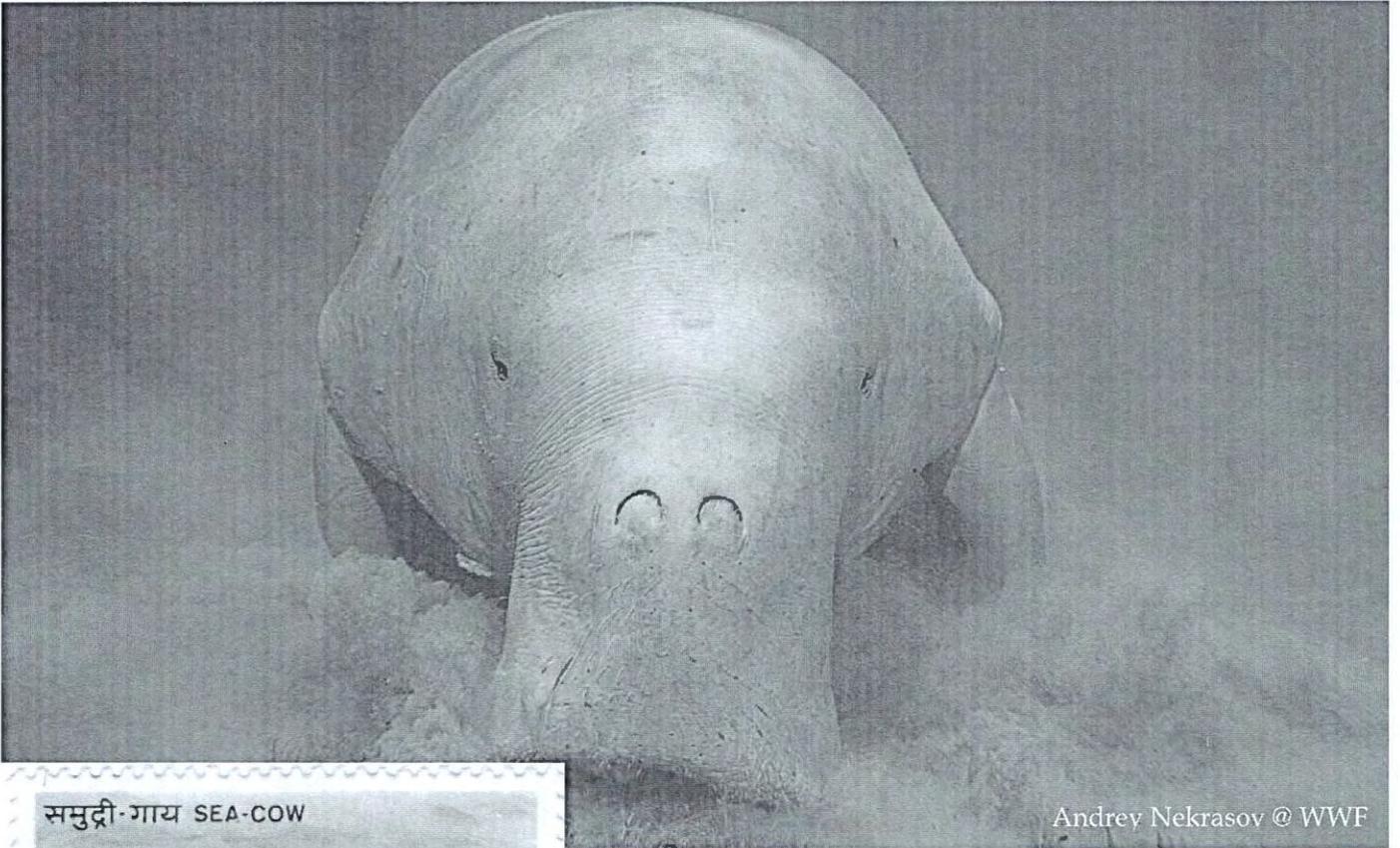
**Status in the IUCN red list of threatened species; Assessment year 2019:** Least Concern (LC)

**Interesting facts:** Murrel was adopted as the State fish of Andhra Pradesh by the proposal of ICAR-NBFGR. In 2016, Telangana also declared their State fish as Murrel. It is a great delicacy among southern population. Due to its availability and affordability, the Striped snakehead is a suitable food source of all economic classes.

Murrel is an obligate air-breathing species. It needs regular trips to the surface to obtain atmospheric oxygen. In regions with rainy and dry seasons, these fish may migrate out from permanent rivers and lakes into flooded areas during the rainy season. They then return to permanent waters as the flooded areas dry up.



Harikrishnan S @ India



Commemorative postage stamp released by the Department of Post, India

## State Animal of Andaman and Nicobar Islands

**Common names:** Dugong, Sea cow, Sea camel

**Scientific name:** *Dugong dugon*

**Vernacular names:** Pani suwar, Samudri gaay

**Habitat:** Inhabits marine neritic and marine intertidal zones of coastal areas, which are shallow to medium deep having warm waters and seagrass beds particularly of low fibre seagrass species.

**Distribution:** Distributed in shallow tropical waters in Indo-Pacific Region. In India, they are seen in Gulf of Kutch, Gulf of Mannar, Palk Bay and Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Dugong Creek in the Little Andaman Island).

**Status in the IUCN red list of threatened species; Assessment year 2015:** Vulnerable (VU)

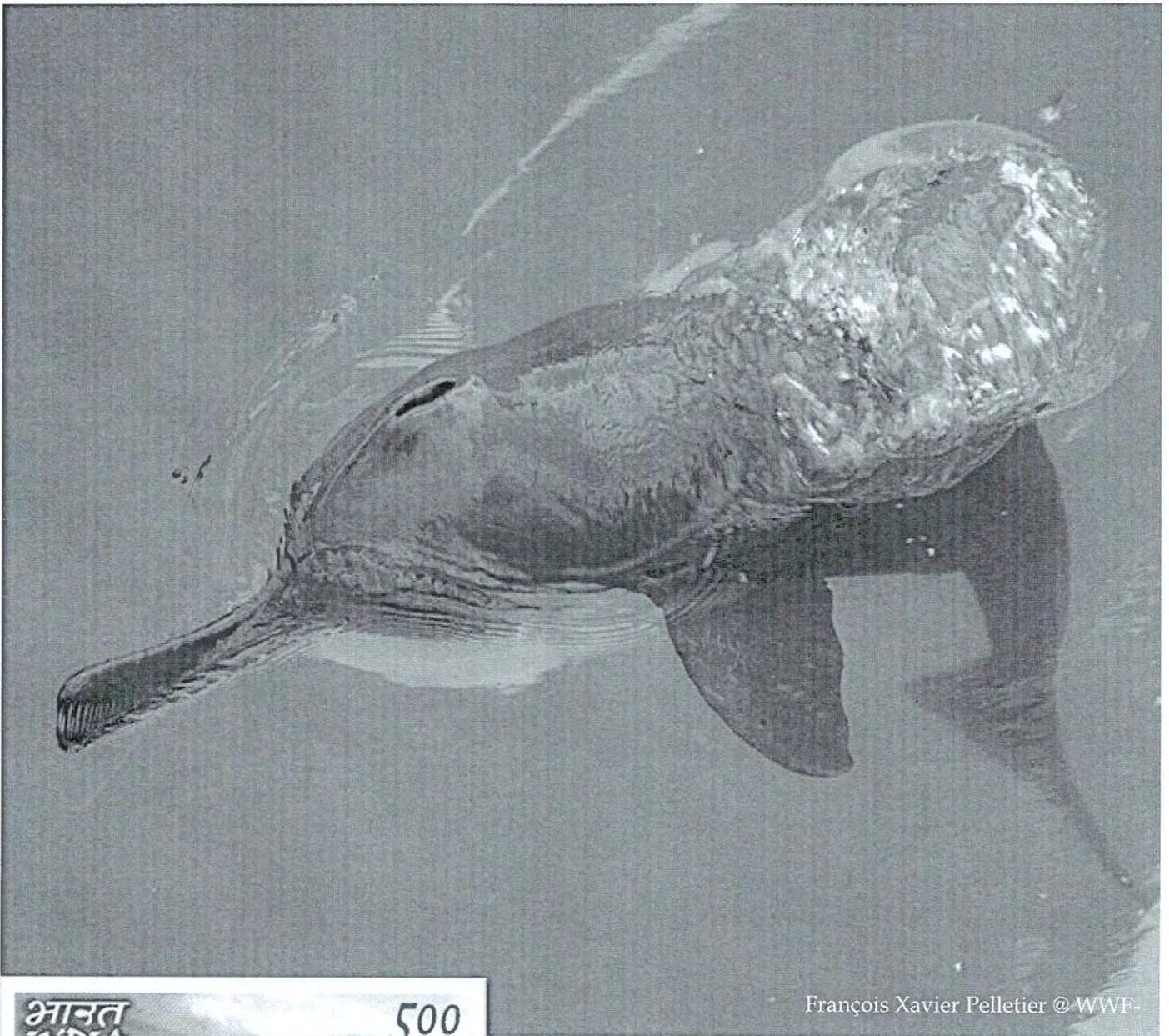
**Conservation efforts:** This herbivorous marine mammal was declared as the State animal by Andaman and Nicobar Islands in 2002. Wildlife Institute of India with the support of MoEFCC has initiated a 'Dugong Scholarship Scheme'. The students selected through the process have been identified as 'Dugong Ambassadors' and have become part of

an extensive 'Dugong Volunteer Network', alternatively known as 'Friends of Dugong network'. In 2022, Tamil Nadu declared India's first Dugong conservation reserve in the Gulf of Mannar and the adjacent Palk Bay. Every year, May 28 is observed as World Dugong Day.

These animals are referred to as 'sea cows' because of their diet consisting of seagrass. Dugongs do not typically breed if there is not enough sea grass available to consume.



@ IUCN SOS



François Xavier Pelletier © WWF-



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## National Aquatic Animal of India

### State Aquatic Animal of Assam and Uttar Pradesh

**Common name:** Ganges River dolphin

**Scientific name:** *Platanista gangetica*

**Vernacular names:** Susu, Shushuk, Xihu, Sisu

**Habitat:** Inhabits freshwater Rivers

**Distribution:** Distributed throughout the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna and Karnaphuli-Sangu River systems of India, Nepal, Bangladesh and potentially Bhutan

**Status in the IUCN red list of threatened species; Assessment year 2021:** Endangered (EN)

**Conservation efforts:** The conservation history of Ganges River dolphin dates back to 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE. It was listed as a protected species in the Edicts of King Asoka. The species was declared as the State aquatic animal by Assam in 2008 and Uttar Pradesh in 2023 and as National Aquatic Animal by the Government of India in 2010. In 2012, WWF-India, in collaboration with the Forest Department, Uttar Pradesh under the aegis of the State Government conceptualised 'My Ganga, My Dolphin' Campaign and has been assessing its distribution and population. In 2022, MoEFCC

designated October 5 to be celebrated as *National Dolphin Day* every year. A stretch of the Ganges River between Sultanganj and Kahlgaon in Bihar is declared as dolphin sanctuary and is named as *Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary*.

Ganges River dolphins hunt by emitting ultrasonic sounds, as their eyes are incapable of forming clear images. These ultrasonic sounds bounce off the prey and enables the dolphins to detect the prey. They have another adaptation to swim on side, which allows them to orient according to the lighter surface of the water and the dark river bottom.



François Xavier Pelletier @ WWF-Canon

## State Fishes and Aquatic animals of India 2024

## State Fishes and Aquatic Animals of India 2024

	Common name	Scientific name
	Golden mahseer	1 <i>Tor putitora</i>
	Golden mahseer	2 <i>Tor putitora</i>
	Golden mahseer	3 <i>Tor putitora</i>
	Orangefin labeo	4 <i>Labeo calbasu</i>
	Indian featherback	5 <i>Chitala chitala</i>
	Ganges River dolphin	5 <i>Platanista gangetica</i>
	Indian walking catfish	6 <i>Clarias magur</i> (previously <i>C. batrachus</i> )
	Golden mahseer	7 <i>Tor putitora</i>
	Chocolate mahseer	8 <i>Neolissochilus hexagonolepis</i>
	Pengba	9 <i>Osteobrama belangeri</i>
	Burmese kingfish	10 <i>Semiplotus modestus</i>
	Indian butter catfish	11 <i>Ompok bimaculatus</i>
Hilsa	12 <i>Tenualosa ilisha</i>	
	Mahanadi mahseer	13 <i>Tor mahanadicus</i>
	Striped murrel	14 <i>Channa striata</i>
	Carnatic carp	15 <i>Barbodes carnaticus</i> (Previously <i>Puntius cataticus</i> )
	Pearlspot	16 <i>Etroplus suratensis</i>
	Threadfin butterflyfish	17 <i>Chaetodon auriga</i>
	Dugong	18 <i>Dugong dugon</i>
	Striped grey mullet	19 <i>Mugil cephalus</i>
	Striped murrel	20 <i>Channa striata</i>
	Silver pomfret	21 <i>Pampus candidus</i>
	Narmada mahseer	22 <i>Tor tor</i>
	Copper mahseer	23 <i>Neolissochilus hexagonolepis</i>
	Ganges River dolphin	24 <i>Platanista gangetica</i>
	Indus River dolphin	25 <i>Platanista minor</i>
	Blackspotted croaker	26 <i>Protonibea diacanthus</i>

## Introduction

India is blessed with rich biodiversity. This is truly reflected in the diversity of marine and freshwater fauna. About 9.7% of total fish species recorded in the world are found in Indian waters. In view of conserving this rich biodiversity, ICAR-NBFGR, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, came up with the concept of State fish in 2006. The objective of the State fish concept was to let the State adopt a fish and conserve their biodiversity. Accordingly, ICAR-NBFGR identified the outstanding prime fish species, State wise and listed them as State fish. The concept involved the integration of key stakeholders in conservation plan. The 16 States which were initially listed i.e. Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal, were provided with an Action Plan and technical backstopping for improved management of the State fish, by ICAR-NBFGR.

In 2010, Government of India notified the Ganges River dolphin as the National Aquatic Animal. In later years, several States followed this path and declared their State fish or State aquatic animal based on abundance, preference and importance of the aquatic organism in day-to-day life of the people. At present, 21 aquatic species are designated either as State

fish, State aquatic animal or State animal. Out of the 36 'States and Union Territories' of India, 22 have either adopted or declared their State fish and 3 have declared State aquatic animal. Two i.e., Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar Islands have declared their State animal, which are marine species as well. More than one State/ Union Territory have selected/ declared the same fish depending on its relevance.

Several cities and towns of India have also declared their mascots in similar fashion. Seven municipal corporations in Gujarat viz. Ahmedabad, Diu, Dwarka, Mangrol, Okha, Porbandar and Veraval have adopted the Whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*, locally known as Vhali) as their city mascot. Most recent addition to this is Guwahati city, which declared Ganges River dolphin as its official mascot and animal of Guwahati in 2016.

Some of these fishes and aquatic animals are listed as 'Near Threatened' and a few as 'Endangered' as per the latest assessment for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species. This further reinstates the importance of declaring the State fish to device strategies and implement them to conserve the rich biodiversity. NFDB has consolidated the latest information on India's State fishes and aquatic animals as a ready reckoner.

## List of Abbreviations

CAMP: Conservation Assessment and Management Plan

ENVIS: Environmental Information System

ICAR: Indian Council of Agricultural research

ICAR-CIBA: ICAR-Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture

ICAR-CIFA: ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture

ICAR-CIFRI: ICAR-Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute

ICAR-IASRI: ICAR-Indian Agricultural Statistics Research Institute

ICAR-NBFGR: ICAR-National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources

IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature

MoEFCC: Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (Government of India)

NACA: Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific

NBFGR-NATP: NBFGR-National Agricultural Technology Project

ppm: parts per million

WWF: World Wide Fund for Nature (formerly World Wildlife Fund)



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## Preface

It is important to bring awareness on conservation and production techniques of aquatic species among the general public to balance sustainability and exploitation of these resources for livelihood maintenance. In this context, the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), Hyderabad as part of its work towards disseminating authentic information in fisheries and aquaculture sector presents the booklet 'State Fishes and Aquatic Animals of India 2024'.

In 2006, the ICAR-NBFGR coordinated with 16 Indian States to select State fish and to develop its conservation strategies. Over the course of time, several other States and Union Territories (UTs) declared State fish/ aquatic animal. Though the details of these fishes and aquatic animals are available, those are largely scattered, incomplete and often inaccurate. The goal of this booklet is to compile and document the developments in declaring State Fish and Aquatic Animal across the country authentically.

I highly appreciate the efforts of NFDB officials and Programme Management Consultancy of EY LLP for PMMSY in meticulously compiling the scattered information on State fishes into this booklet. I hope the information in the booklet 'State Fishes and Aquatic Animals of India 2024', would be useful to fisheries policy makers, fisheries organisations, researchers, students, etc. in sustaining, restoring, and enhancing the nation's fish and other aquatic lives for current and future generations.

(B. K. Behera)

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Dr. Abhilaksh Likhi, IAS  
Secretary



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## Foreword

Government of India is implementing Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) in all the States and Union Territories for a period of 5 years from financial year 2020-21 to FY2024-25 with an investment of Rs 20050 crore in fisheries sector. To make the fisheries sector resilient and efficient, in February 2024, Government of India further approved a Central Sector Sub-scheme named "Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah Yojana (PM-MKSSY)" under PMMSY with an investment of Rs 6000 crore. An efficient and resilient fisheries sector of the nation is dependent on several factors such as conservation of its fishery resources (both marine and inland), improved fish production and productivity, aquaculture species diversification etc.

The concept of State fish- a brainchild of ICAR-NBFGR has been playing a significant role in conservation and management of fish resources in India. Several States in India have declared their State fish. Though the information on these State fishes is not scarce, not all information available is accurate and reliable. It is commendable that the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) has taken up the task of presenting the reliable and relevant information about the States fishes declared so far in India into a Booklet. The first of this kind of booklet was published by NFDB in 2023. This year, the Booklet is updated and presented with more information.

The scope of present publication has been enhanced significantly to cover the exhaustive information on these aquatic organisms' habitat, distribution, IUCN red list status, conservation developments, culture trends etc. Explanatory notes and sources have also been indicated to facilitate further research by the readers. It can be seen as a toolbox of arguments for convincing decision makers and the public that such fascinating creatures must be preserved. I commend NFDB for their effort in gathering valid and authentic information on State fishes and aquatic animals of India and bring out this booklet for the larger interest of fisheries sector.

(Abhilaksh Likhi)

एडवोकेट जॉर्ज कुरियन  
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75  
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अमृत महोत्सव

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भारत सरकार

MINISTER OF STATE FOR  
FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY & DAIRYING AND  
MINORITY AFFAIRS  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

## Message

History of India's fisheries sector dates back to more than 2000 years ago. Mentions about the fish and fisheries in India can be traced back to pre-Vedic, Vedic and post-Vedic periods, the period of the Sangam literature of south India, the works of Kautilya (Arthashastra) and the composition of King Someswara (Manasollasa) etc. Now, through Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) and its new Sub-Scheme Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY), the Indian fisheries sector is programmed for sectoral transformation in India.

To tap the full potential of the sector, policies and programmes that can sustainably bring about an enhancement in fish production and productivity must be implemented efficiently along with the conservation of the ecological integrity of the aquatic resources. Fisheries, especially ones with multiple species like in India, can have a range of challenges on the path to sustainability. Balancing the fishing industry with the conservation of the aquatic biodiversity on which the industry and the community depends is the need of the hour. This will ensure the steady supply of nutritious fish food and socio-economic development of millions of fishers and fish farmers who rely on the sector. I am sure that this booklet will aid greatly towards conservation and species diversification in the fisheries sector.

I compliment National Fisheries Development Board for their sustained efforts in bridging a critical gap in the existing body of literature in fisheries resource management to bring forth sustainability of our fisheries resources. The booklet, undeniably, will be quite handy for fisheries researchers, scholars, policy planners and general public. I appreciate all those who have contributed in the making of this noteworthy publication.

(George Kurian)

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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



## Message

India is a global leader in fisheries, ranking first in inland fish production, third in capture fish production, and second in total fish production, contributing 8% to global fish output. The fisheries sector is crucial for food security, employment, income, and foreign exchange. This growth is driven by initiatives like the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), running from FY 2020-21 to FY 2024-25. As PMMSY enters its fifth year, the Union Cabinet approved the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY) in February 2024 to formalize the sector and support small enterprises.

In addition to implementing policies and strategies aimed at enhancing fish production and productivity, it is crucial to focus on the conservation of India's extensive and diverse aquatic resources. This conservation effort is essential to maintain the ecological balance and socio-economic stability of the fisheries sector, ensuring its long-term sustainability and resilience. By preserving these aquatic ecosystems, we can support the livelihoods of those dependent on fisheries, protect biodiversity, and contribute to the overall health of the environment.

The National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) has been pivotal in the sector's holistic development, documenting strategies and achievements. The release of a publication on state fishes and aquatic animals will aid in biodiversity preservation. I commend the NFDB and all contributors to this valuable publication.

(Prof. S. P. Singh Baghel)

राजीव रंजन सिंह उर्फ ललन सिंह  
RAJIV RANJAN SINGH ALIAS LALAN SINGH



## Message

पंचायती राज मंत्री एवं  
मत्स्यपालन, पशुपालन एवं डेयरी मंत्री  
भारत सरकार  
Minister of Panchayati Raj and  
Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying  
Government of India

India is blessed with an array of diverse water resources and aquatic species. It is home to over 2,000 species of fish. Sustainable use of these enormous resources (both marine and inland) to its full potential, can be achieved by building a robust fisheries management and regulatory framework through an integrated process of information gathering, analysis, planning, consultation, decision-making, enforcement etc. Achieving sustainable management and conservation of natural aquatic resources requires coordinated efforts among policy makers, academicians, researchers and general public and dissemination of knowledge on aquatic resources.

It gives me immense pleasure to know that the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) has come out with the updated booklet 'State Fishes and Aquatic Animals of India 2024', a highly informative publication chronicling the recent developments in declaring State fishes and aquatic animals. It is noteworthy to mention that the Booklet provides summary of the categorization, status, conservation and/ or culture techniques adopted etc. for each State fish/ aquatic animal.

I congratulate NFDB for preparing this publication, which will act as an important resource book for all the stakeholders of fisheries sector. I am sure that the Booklet will have a significant role in fisheries management and effective planning for sustainable fish production in the country

(Rajiv Ranjan Singh)



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Citation:

NFDB. 2024. State Fishes and Aquatic Animals of India 2024. National Fisheries Development Board, Hyderabad. Pp. 48.

Release:

September 2024

# STATE FISHES AND AQUATIC ANIMALS OF INDIA 2024



**NATIONAL FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

**Department of Fisheries**

**Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying**

**Government of India**



भारत सरकार  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

मत्स्यपालन विभाग  
DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES

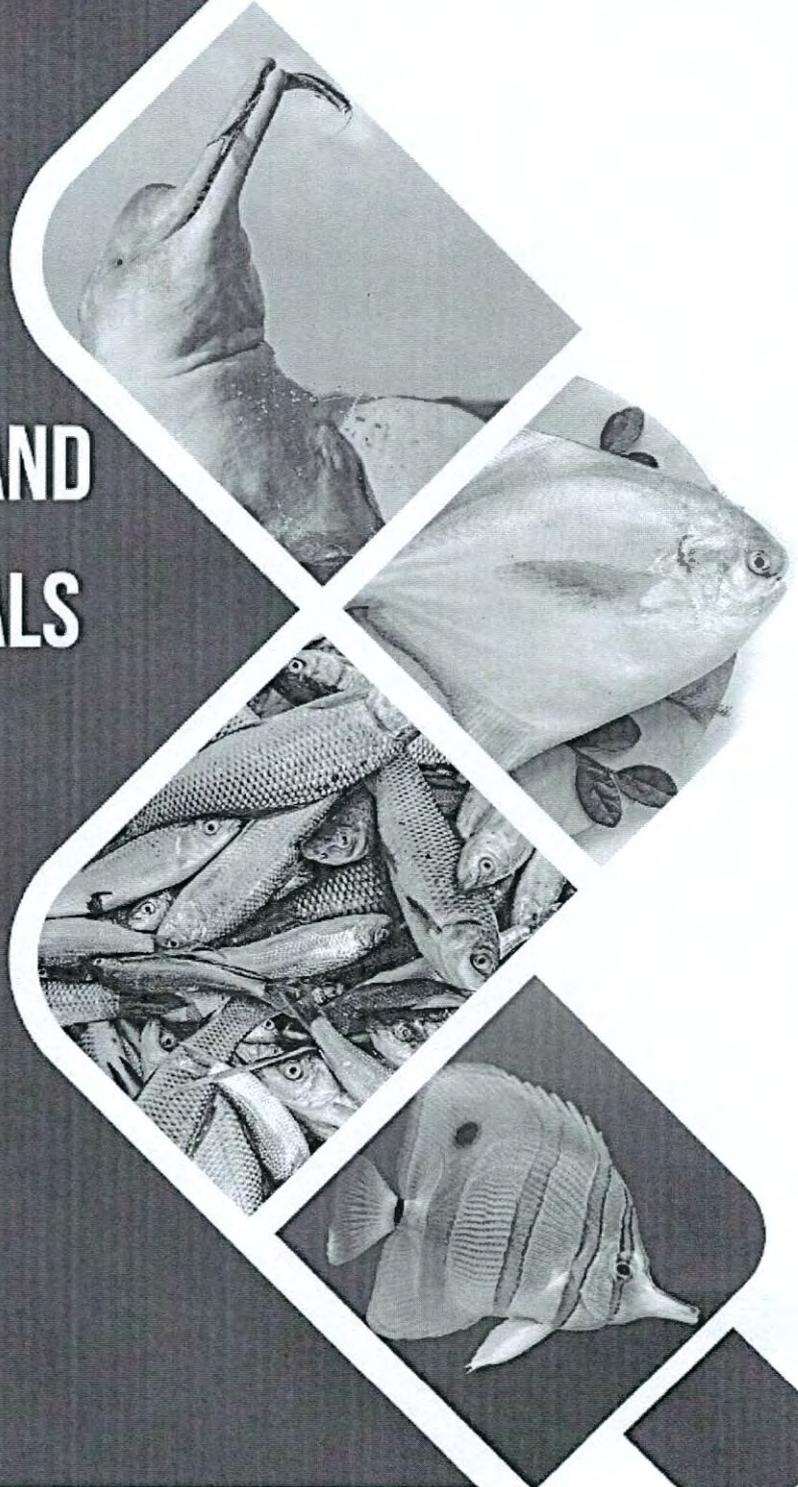
सत्यमेव जयते



NATIONAL  
FISHERIES  
DEVELOPMENT  
BOARD

# STATE FISHES AND AQUATIC ANIMALS OF INDIA

## 2024



NATIONAL FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
MINISTRY OF FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA