

STATE FISHES AND AQUATIC ANIMALS OF INDIA



NATIONAL FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying
Government of India





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सत्यमेव जयते



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Message

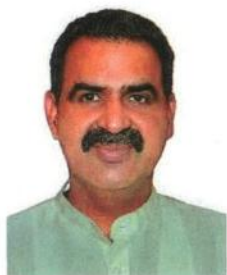
India is blessed with a bounty of inland and marine aquatic resources. Sustainable utilization of these resources is of paramount importance to exploit the enormous potential and opportunities for generating employment and income. In terms of employment, fisheries sector supports the livelihood of over 28 million people in India. The country is the third largest fish-producer in the world accounting for 8% of global production and contributing about 1.1% and over 6.72% to the country's GVA and agricultural GVA respectively. To support and promote this sector, the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying has implemented a flagship scheme "Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) to bring about Blue Revolution through sustainable and responsible development of the fisheries sector in India" with the highest ever investment of Rs 20050 crore for a period of five years effective from FY 2020-21 till FY 2024-25 in all States and Union Territories.

Building a robust fisheries management and regulatory framework- one of the key objectives of PMMSY can be achieved only by the integrated process of information gathering, analysis, planning, consultation, decision-making, enforcement etc. It gives me immense pleasure to know that the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) with the objective of achieving sustainable management and conservation of natural aquatic resources including the fish stocks and in alignment with PMMSY's objective, has come out with the booklet 'State Fishes and Aquatic Animals of India'. This highly informative publication brought out by NFDB chronicles the recent developments in declaring State fishes and aquatic animals and provides the summary of the categorization, status, conservation measures, culture techniques adopted etc. for each State fish/ aquatic animal.

I would like to compliment NFDB for preparing this publication, which will serve as an important resource book for the fisheries sector. I hope this will be of great value for fisheries management and for effective planning for sustainable fish production in the country. I compliment all the members of the publishing team of NFDB for this important contribution.


(Parshottam Rupala)

डॉ० संजीव कुमार बालियान
DR. SANJEEV KUMAR BALYAN



सत्यमेव जयते



राज्य मंत्री
मत्स्यपालन, पशुपालन एवं डेयरी मंत्रालय
भारत सरकार

कृषि भवन, नई दिल्ली-110001

MINISTER OF STATE FOR FISHERIES,
ANIMAL HUSBANDRY & DAIRYING
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
KRISHI BHAWAN, NEW DELHI-110001

Message

The fisheries sector in India is witnessing a tremendous change through the initiatives of the Government of India especially Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY). Today, India is among the top capture fisheries and fish farming nations in the world. The sector is marching ahead with increased pace and has played an instrumental role in ensuring the food and nutritional security, employment, income, and foreign exchange in India and has immense potential. In this juncture, we as a Nation need to concentrate more on the conservation of its vast and diverse aquatic resources which is not only essential for food security but also to maintain ecological and socio-economic equilibrium.

Since its inception, the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) has played a vital role in the holistic development of the fisheries sector and is documenting the developmental strategies and achievements made in the fisheries sector. The proactive involvement of NFDB in disseminating information on fisheries across the country is highly commendable.

I am happy to note the release of this publication, documenting country's innovative approach to conserve its incredible fisheries resources will be an asset in devising strategies to preserve existing biodiversity and the evolutionary processes that foster biodiversity. This booklet is a compendium of useful information about State fishes and aquatic animals declared in India. I appreciate the work of NFDB, and all those who have contributed in the making of this noteworthy publication.


Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Balyan

डॉ. एल. मुरुगन
Dr. L. MURUGAN



सत्यमेव जयते
75
आज़ादी का
अमृत महोत्सव

राज्य मंत्री
सूचना एवं प्रसारण मंत्रालय और
मत्स्य पालन, पशुपालन और डेयरी मंत्रालय
भारत सरकार
MINISTER OF STATE FOR
INFORMATION & BROADCASTING AND
FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Message

Indian fisheries sector is scaling new heights, following the mantra of "Reform, Perform, Transform" given by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. The last nine years have seen unprecedented investments and sustained reforms, resulting into record breaking achievements in this sector. The Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana, worth Rs. 20050 crore launched under Atmanirbhar Bharat Package in 2020 has ensured transformational changes in this sector. Apart from setting specific targets for fish production, aquaculture productivity, exports, reduction in post harvest losses, the scheme also aims to increase domestic fish consumption, thereby giving a push for expansion of domestic market, and at the same time ensuring sustainability and conservation.

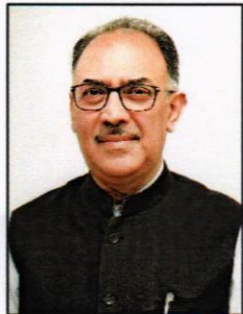
The 'State Fish Booklet' published by NFDB supplements these efforts in a unique way, by cataloguing all 'State Fish Species' in India in a single booklet, giving details of their characteristics, features and interesting facts associated with them. It has endeavoured to bring the fish world closer to the general public. The NFDB has thus successfully attempted to create awareness and promote interest about Indian fish species.

I congratulate Team NFDB for this stellar work.

(Dr. L. Murugan)

Dr. Abhilaksh Likhi, IAS
Secretary

डॉ अभिलक्ष लिखी, भा.प्र.से.
सचिव



सत्यमेव जयते



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

Government of India
Ministry of Fisheries,
Animal Husbandry & Dairying
Department of Fisheries
Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi-110001

Foreword

"Fish are the last wild food we hunt and gather."

-Barton Seaver

The quote shows the importance of fish as food for sustenance of our daily life. The Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying (MOFAH&D), Government of India is implementing Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)- A scheme to bring about ecologically healthy, economically viable, and socially inclusive development of the fisheries sector of India. To satiate the demand forecast for increased seafood consumption, the Nation has to improve its fish production and productivity, manage its fish resources (both marine and inland) sustainably and concentrate on aquaculture species diversification by developing hatchery techniques, advanced culture methods 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. The information on these State fishes are not scarce. However, not all information available is accurate and reliable. Here comes the relevance of the booklet 'State Fishes and Aquatic Animals of India' published by National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB). This autonomous body under MOFAH&D brings out the booklet with a variety of information on State fishes and aquatic animals declared in India. MOFAH&D has a long history of supporting compilation and dissemination of reliable information on fisheries and aquaculture throughout the country.

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.

Dr. Abhilaksh Likhi



सत्यमेव जयते

डॉ. एल. नरसिम्हा मूर्ति, ए.आर.एस
मुख्य कार्यपालक (प्रभारी)

Dr. L. Narasimha Murthy, ARS
Chief Executive i/c



राष्ट्रीय मात्स्यिकी विकास बोर्ड

National Fisheries Development Board

मत्स्य पालन विभाग/ Department of Fisheries

(मत्स्यपालन, पशुपालन एवं डेयरी मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार)

(Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Govt. of India)

स्तम्भ संख्या-235, पी.वी.एन.आर. एक्सप्रेस वे, डाक-एस.वी.पी. एन.पी.ए, हैदराबाद-500 052

Pillar No. 235, PVNR Expressway, SVP NPA Post, Hyderabad-500 052

फोन/Phone No. 040-24015553

ईमेल/email: senior-ed@nfdb.gov.in, drlnmurthy@gmail.com;

वेबसाइट/website: nfdb.gov.in

Preface

National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), Hyderabad has been consistently working towards disseminating authentic information in fisheries sector and is pleased to present the booklet 'State Fishes and Aquatic Animals of India'. The goal of this booklet is to compile and document the latest developments in declaring State Fish across the country and to inspire those States and Union Territories which haven't declared their State fish so far, to follow the path. It is important that all the States and Union Territories declare their state fish and start contributing towards the conservation of neglected species which are in urgent need of conservation and/ or the development of modern hatchery and culture techniques for economically important fish species. To balance livelihoods and sustainability, it is important to bring awareness on conservation and production techniques of these aquatic species among the people.

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 declared State fish/ aquatic animal. Though the details of these fishes and aquatic animals are available in many print and online media, those are largely scattered, incomplete and often inaccurate. Hence the need for this booklet. The booklet presents the State fishes and aquatic animals of India declared so far in colour images along with the details of its importance in aquaculture and/ or biodiversity, taxonomic details, habitat, IUCN status, conservation measures taken, etc. I hope the information in the booklet 'State Fishes and Aquatic Animals of India', 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.

I highly appreciate the efforts of NFDB officials and PMC (Ernst & Young LLP) team of PMMSY in meticulously compiling the scattered information on State fishes into this booklet. The initial draft of the booklet was prepared and reviewed by the internal NFDB team and the additional comments were provided by Dr A. Kathirvelpandian and Dr Rejani Chandran, (ICAR-NBFGR), Dr C. K. Murthy, (SIFA), Dr Arun Kumar O. Ratheesh, (ICAR-CIARI), Dr Sajina A. M (ICAR-CIFRI), Dr Pankaj Kishore (ICAR-CIFT), Dr Babitha Rani (ICAR-CIFE), Dr Rajesh K. M. (ICAR-CMFRI) and Mr Nesnas Nazir (Department of Fisheries, Andaman & Nicobar). I hope that this booklet will serve as a valid one-stop reference for the State fishes and aquatic animals declared across the country till date.

L. Narasimha Murthy

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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)

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 waters¹. In view of conserving this rich biodiversity, ICAR-NBFGR, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, came up with the concept of State fish in 2006². 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-NBFGR³.

In 2010, Government of India notified the Ganges River dolphin as the National Aquatic Animal⁴. 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, out of the current 28 States and 8 Union Territories of India, 21 have either adopted or declared State fish and 3 have declared State aquatic animal. 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.

¹ K.C. Gopi and S.S. Mishra. 2015. Chapter 12 - Diversity of Marine Fish of India In: Marine Faunal Diversity in India. K. Venkataraman and C. Sivaperuman (eds.). Academic Press. Pp. 171-193. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-801948-1.00012-4>.

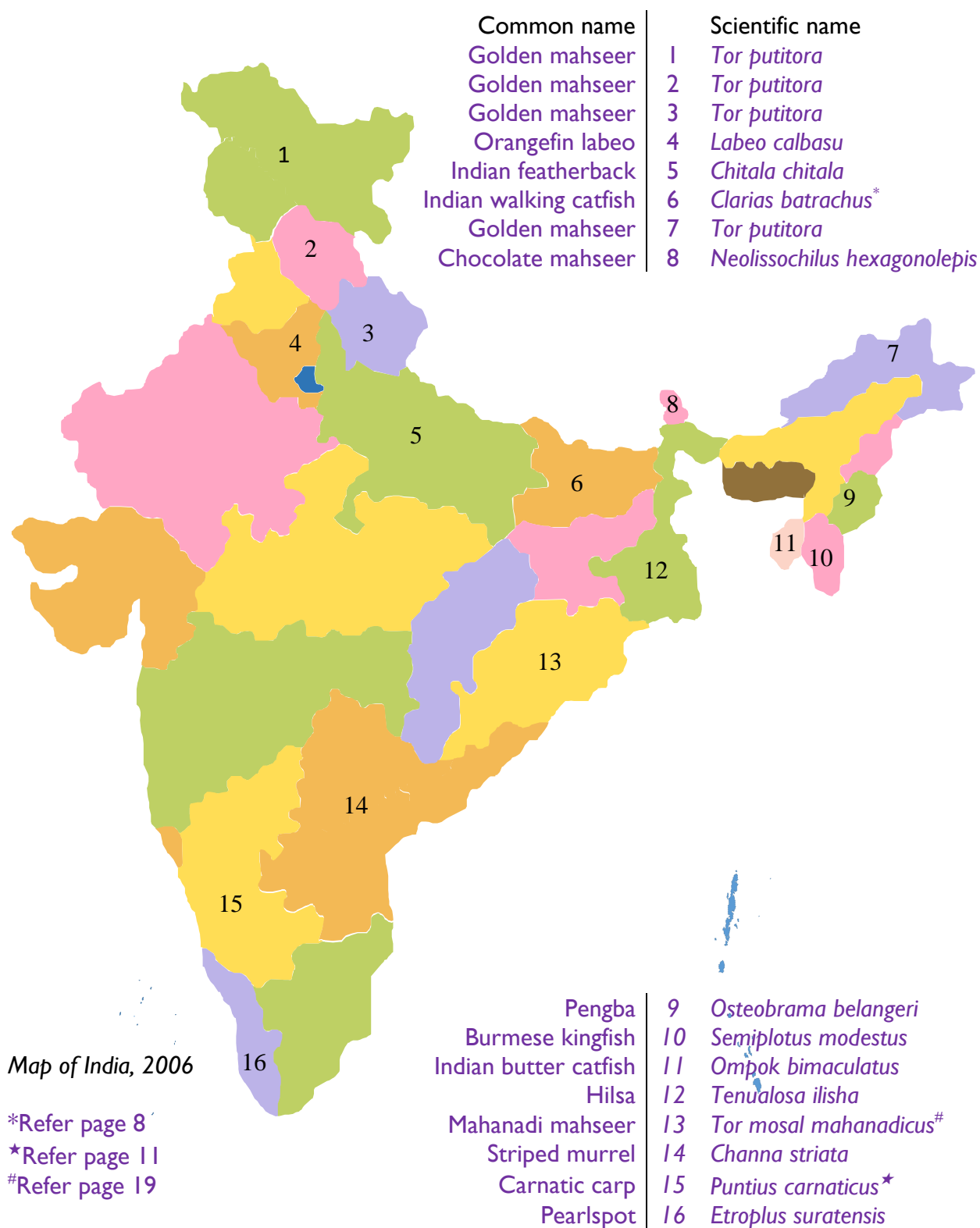
² ICAR-NBFGR. 2008. Annual Report 2007-08. ICAR-NBFGR, Lucknow. P.11.

³ Lakra W. S. and Sarkar U. K. 2011. Conservation of fish biodiversity: Innovative approach. The concept of State Fish. *Fishing Chimes*, 31: 36-39.

⁴ Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India. 2010. Press Release Note on Dolphin dated May 18, 2010. https://www.nmcg.nic.in/writereaddata/fileupload/1_Dolphins_press_n.pdf

State Fishes of India originally listed by ICAR-NBFGR

(as on 2006)

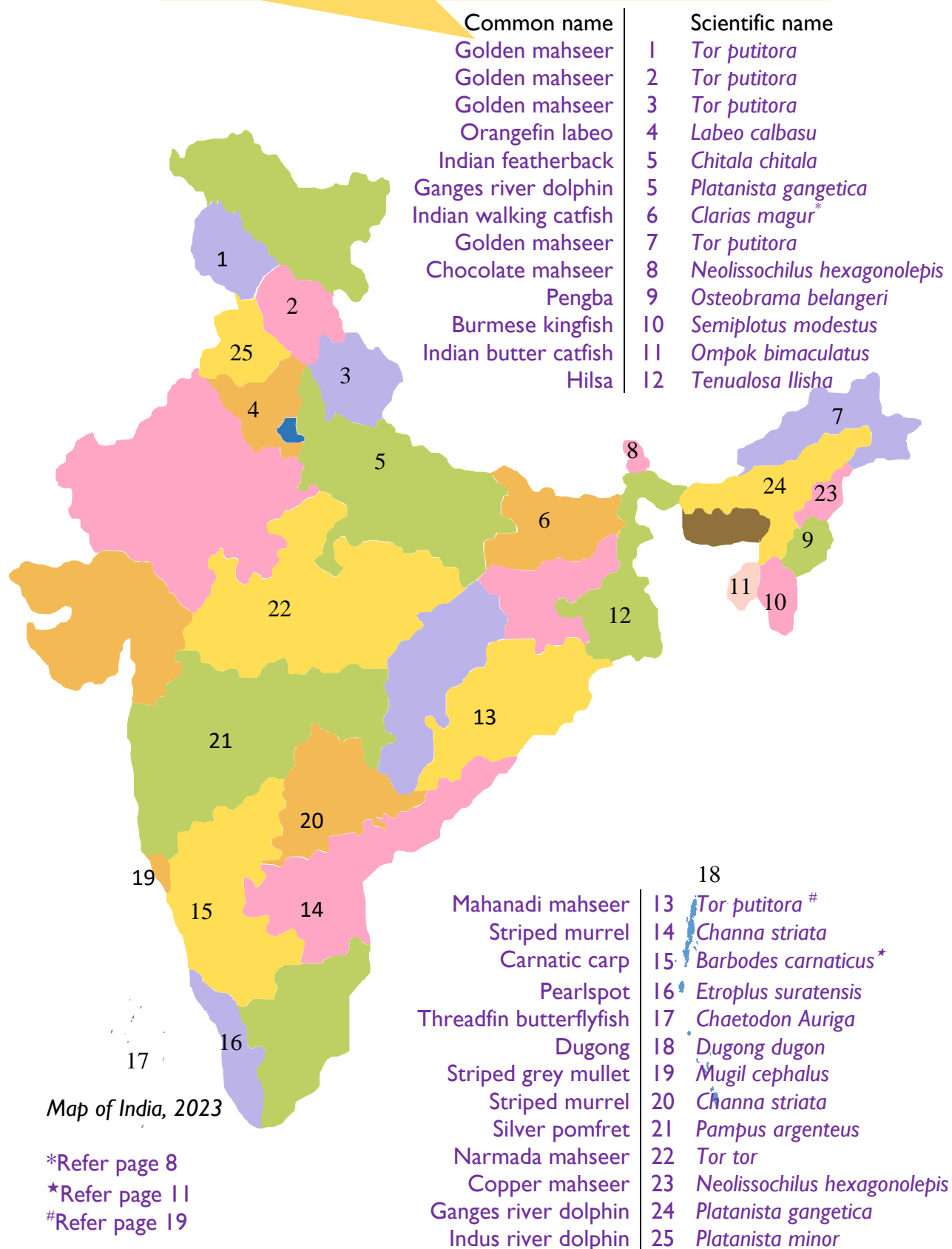


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State Fishes and Aquatic Animals of India (as on 2023)



National Aquatic Animal of India and 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)



Commemorative postage stamp released by the Department of Post, India



Interesting facts: Ganges River dolphin was declared as the State aquatic animal by Assam in 2008¹ and Uttar Pradesh in 2023 and as National Aquatic Animal by 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. It was listed as a protected species in the Edicts of King Asoka more than 2000 years ago. As their eyes are incapable of forming clear images, Ganges River dolphins hunt by emitting ultrasonic sounds which bounces off the prey enabling them to detect the prey. Their adaptation to swim on side, allows them to orient according to the lighter surface of the water and the dark river bottom.

¹ Year 2022 Calendar. CM Portal, Assam. P. 13. <https://cm.assam.gov.in/search?q=dolphin>

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. In regions with rainy and dry seasons, these fish may migrate out from permanent rivers and lakes into flooded areas during the rainy season, and then return to

permanent waters as the flooded areas dry.

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. Later, Telangana also declared their State fish as Murrel in 2016¹. The fish is an obligate air-breathing species-regular trips to the surface are needed to obtain atmospheric oxygen. 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.



¹ G.O.Ms.No.20 dated 20.07.2016. Government of Telangana.

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)



Commemorative postage stamp released by the Department of Post, India

Interesting facts: This herbivorous marine mammal¹ was declared as the State animal by Andaman and Nicobar Islands in 2002². 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. 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.

¹ Committee on Taxonomy. 2023. List of marine mammal species and subspecies. Society for Marine Mammalogy, Yarmouth, Massachusetts. <https://marinemammalscience.org/science-and-publications/list-marine-mammal-species-subspecies/>

² Department of Environment & Forest, Andaman & Nicobar Administration. <http://ls1.and.nic.in/doef/index.php>

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)

Interesting facts: Golden mahseer was adopted as the State fish of Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand in the original ICAR-NBFGFR 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 banks¹. The fish is called as 'tiger of water/ rivers', for its vigour, golden colour and athletic abilities.



¹ Dandekar P. 2013. Community fish sanctuaries protect the fish and their rivers. *South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers & People*. 11 (9-10): 9-11.

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.



Sullip Kumar Majhi et al. @ MethodsX

Distribution: Distributed in India and Bangladesh

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



Susanta Tanti @ India Biodiversity Portal

Interesting facts: 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

Indonesia¹ and it is *C. magur* which are seen in North Eastern India which was previously misidentified as *C. batrachus*². *C. magur* is differentiated genetically and phenotypically from *C. batrachus* based on the former's deeply serrated pectoral spine and the difference in the head shape. Recently, ICAR-NBFGR in collaboration with ICAR-CIFA, Anand Agricultural University and ICAR-IASRI decoded the complete genome of Indian walking catfish.

¹ Baisvar V., Kushwaha B., Kumar R., Sanjeev Kumar M., Pande, M., and Singh M. 2021. Chromosome analysis of walking catfish, *Clarias magur* (Teleostei, Siluriformes, Clariidae), using staining, FISH with 18S, 5S and BAC probes. *Journal of Applied Ichthyology*, 37(4), 563–571. doi:10.1111/jai.14188

² Ng H. H. and Kottelat M. 2008. The identity of *Clarias batrachus* (Linnaeus, 1758), with the designation of a neotype (Teleostei: Clariidae). *Zoological Journal of the Linnean Society*, 153: 725–732. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1096-3642.2008.00391.x>

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 2016¹. 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. The fish is an ecologically important link in the energy flow within estuarine and marine communities. Feeding by sucking up the top layer of sediments, striped mullet removes detritus and microalgae. The thick-walled gizzard-like segments in their stomach along with a long gastrointestinal tract enable them to feed on detritus.



¹ Goan Fish Trail. 2016. Directorate of Fisheries, Government of Goa. Pp. 22-23.
<https://fisheries.goa.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Goan-Fish-Trail-2016.pdf>

State Fish of Haryana

Common names: Orange fin

labeo, Karnataka labeo, Black rohu

Scientific name: *Labeo calbasu*

Vernacular names: Kalbasu, Kurcha

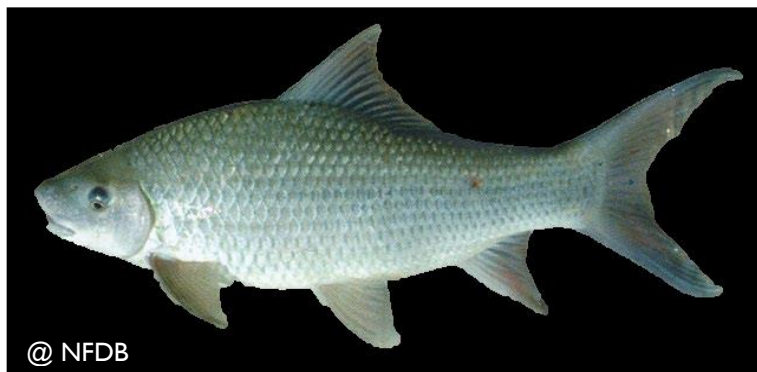


Habitat: Inhabits ponds and slow-moving waters of rivers

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 is the most important carp species next to *L. rohita*, *L. catla*¹ and *Cirrhinus mrigala*. It is a popular food as well as a game fish. 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'². The existing populations of *L. calbasu* can be protected by reducing the pressure on brood fishes from natural sources.

¹ Yang L., M. Arunchalam, T. Sado, B. A. Levin, A. S. Golubtsov, J. Freyhof, J. P. Friel, W.-J. Chen, M. V. Hirt, et al. 2012. Molecular phylogeny of the cyprinid tribe Labeonini (Teleostei: Cypriniformes). *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution*, 65 (2): 362-379. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ympev.2012.06.007>

² CAMP. 1998. Conservation assessment and management plan for freshwater fishes of India. In: Workshop Report. Molur, S. and Walker, S. (eds.). Zoo Outreach Organization, Coimbatore/CBGS and NBFGR, Lucknow, India. P. 158.

State Fish of Karnataka



N. Basavaraja @ FishBase

Common names: Carnatic carp, Cauvery carp

Scientific name: *Barbodes carnaticus* (previously recorded as *Puntius carnaticus*)¹


Vernacular names: Kaveri kendai, Kaverimeenu, Pachilavetti



N. Basavaraja @ FishBase

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)

Interesting facts: 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 synonym² and is renamed as *Barbodes carnaticus*. Owing to the fish's importance, Department of Post, Government of India released a stamp



Vinay T. N. et al @ Aquaculture Asia, NACA

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. It is a valued table fish and a popular sport fish among fish anglers. The breeding technology of the fish has already been standardised by ICAR-CIFA.

¹ Fricke R., Eschmeyer W. N. and Van der Laan R. (eds). 2023. *Eschmeyer's catalog of fishes: Genera, Species, References*. <http://researcharchive.calacademy.org/research/ichthyology/catalog/fishcatmain.asp>

² Froese R. and D. Pauly. (eds). 2023. FishBase. www.fishbase.org, version (02/2023).

State Fish of Kerala

Common names: Pearlspot, 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 pearlspot 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 Pearlspot farming through the '**Matsya Kerala Programme**'. The fish has an elliptical greyish green body with dark bands and shiny white diamond like spots all over the body. It is a euryhaline species and is the largest among all Indian cichlids. Karimeen is a high valued delicacy in Kerala.

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 importance¹. 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.



¹ Planning Department Secretariat. 1986. Part 1; Introduction to Land and People. *In*: Lakshadweep and Its People. Planning Department Secretariat, Lakshadweep. P.10.

http://14.139.60.153/bitstream/123456789/6253/1/Lakshadweep%20and%20Its%20people%20january%201986_D03606.pdf

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

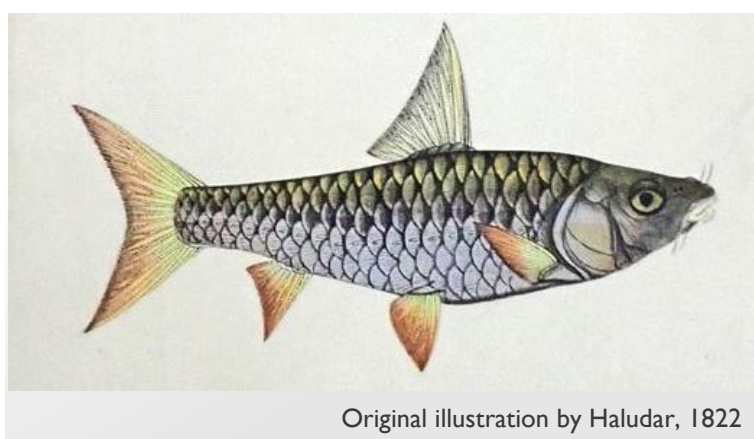


Dipesh Debnath @ FishBase

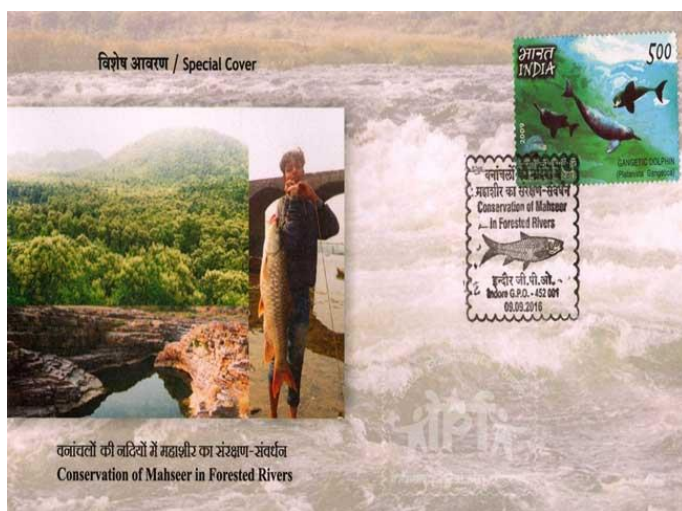
Habitat: Inhabits rapid streams with rocky bottom, rivers and lakes. Grow better in a river with a rocky bottom.

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)



Original illustration by Haludar, 1822



Special cover released by the Department of Post, India

Interesting facts: *T. tor* was first described by Hamilton (1822) from Mahananda, a tributary of the Ganges flowing through North-East Bengal. The fish was declared as the State fish by the Government of Madhya Pradesh in 2011¹. 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.

¹ Madhya Pradesh State Biodiversity Board (MPSBB). <https://mpsbb.mp.gov.in/symbol.html>

State Fish of Maharashtra



Common names: Silver pomfret, White pomfret

Scientific name: *Pampus argenteus*

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



Habitat: Marine neritic. The fish is seen in coastal waters between 5 - 80 m in depth and occurs seasonally in schools that can be large and abundant over muddy bottoms, associated with prawns.

Distribution: Silver pomfret is a native to Western Indian Ocean. Distributed from Persian Gulf to eastern Indonesia, North to Japan.

Status in the IUCN red list of threatened species; Assessment year 2014: Vulnerable (VU)

Interesting facts: 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.



Definitive stamp by the Department of Post, India

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)



Interesting facts: Pengba was adopted as the State fish of Manipur as per the original ICAR-NBFGR proposal. The fish is named in the honour of botanist and explorer, Charles Paulus Bélanger (1805-1881), who collected the 'type' specimen. 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'¹. 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.

¹ ENVIS Centre. 2015. Environment Story of Manipur 2. MoEFCC. Government of India. <https://manenvis.nic.in/MajorActivityArchive.aspx?Id=3392&Year=2015>

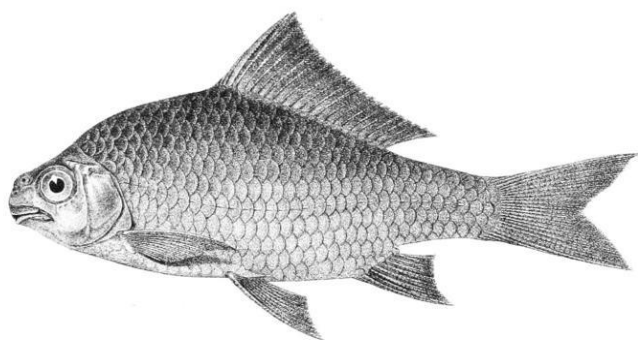
State Fish of Mizoram



Common name: Burmese kingfish

Scientific name: *Semiplotus modestus*


Vernacular name: Nghavang



Original illustration of Francis Day, 1878

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)

Interesting facts: The fish was adopted as the State fish of Mizoram as per the original ICAR-NBFGR proposal. Day (1870) described *S. modestus* first from Akyab (now Sittwe), Kaladan basin in Myanmar and referred to the fish as 'Burmese Kingfish'¹. 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.



¹ Vishvanath W. 2014. The Kingfishes of the Eastern Himalaya. *Newsletter of the IUCN-SSC/WI Freshwater Fish Specialist Group South Asia & the Freshwater Fish Conservation*: 2: 5-7. Network of South Asia.
https://www.zoosprint.zooreach.org/ZoosPrintNewsLetter/MIN_January_2014.pdf

State Fish of Nagaland and Sikkim

Common names: Copper mahseer, Chocolate mahseer

Scientific name: *Neolissochilus hexagonolepis*

Vernacular names: Katli, Khaw, Katley, Boka pithia

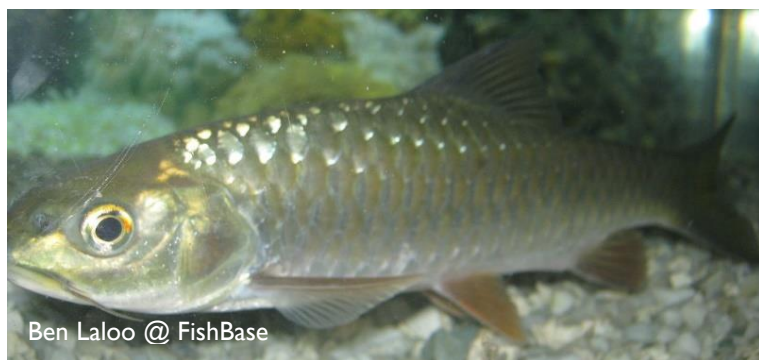


Habitat: Inhabits fast flowing streams and rivers with rocky bottom, mainly in the middle of streams.

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)



Interesting facts: The fish was adopted as the State fish of Sikkim as per the original ICAR-NBFGR proposal. Later, the State of Nagaland officially declared the species as State fish in 2007. Government of Sikkim followed the same in 2021¹. 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 content². Their population is decreasing due to anthropogenic pressures, pollution, unregulated and destructive fishing methods etc. Hence, there is a need for special attention and measures to conserve the depleting population of this fish.

¹ Notification No. 780/Fish dated 26.08.2021. Government of Sikkim. <https://sikenvis.nic.in/WriteReadData/UserFiles/file/State-Fish-of-Sikkim.pdf>

² Mohanty B. P., Ganguly S., Mahanty A., Sankar T. V., Anandan R., Chakraborty K., Paul B. N., Sarma D., Syama Dayal J., Venkateshwarlu G., Mathew S., Asha K. K., Karunakaran D., Mitra T., Chanda S., Shahi N., Das P., Das P., Akhtar M. S., Vijayagopal P. and Sridhar N. 2016. DHA and EPA Content and Fatty Acid Profile of 39 Food Fishes from India. *Biomedical Research International*, 4027437. doi: 10.1155/2016/4027437.

State Fish of Odisha



Common name: Mahanadi mahseer

Scientific name: *Tor putitora*
(previously recorded as *T. mosal 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)

Interesting facts: Mahanadi mahseer was adopted as the State fish of Odisha as per the proposal of ICAR-NBFGR. 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. Recent genetic divergence analysis observed that in all likelihood *T. mosal mahanadicus* is a sub-population or genetic stock of *T. putitora*¹. The previously accepted *T. mosal mahanadicus* is now a non-valid synonym and is merged with *T. putitora* based on molecular data². 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.

¹ Khare P., Mohindra V., Barman A.S. et al. 2014. Molecular evidence to reconcile taxonomic instability in mahseer species (Pisces: Cyprinidae) of India. *Organisms Diversity & Evolution*, 14: 307–326. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13127-014-0172-8>

² Fricke R., Eschmeyer W. N. and Van der Laan R. (eds). 2023. *Eschmeyer's catalog of fishes: Genera, Species, References*. <http://researcharchive.calacademy.org/research/ichthyology/catalog/fishcatmain.asp>

State Aquatic Animal of Punjab

Common name: Indus River dolphin

Scientific name: *Platanista minor*

Vernacular names: Sindhu Nadi Dolphin, Bhulan Machi



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

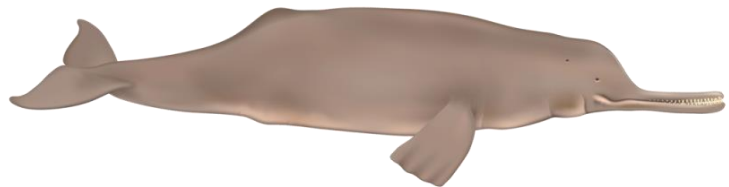


Illustration by Uko Gorter @ www.riverdolphins.org

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



Interesting facts: The Indus River dolphin was declared as the State aquatic animal by the Government of Punjab in 2019. It is an obligate freshwater mammal and has extremely poor eyesight. Hence, it relies on echolocation to perceive their environment. They have special adaptations such as swimming on their sides 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, divergence time and skull structure, support them being distinct species rather than sub-species of one species¹. The main physical distinction between them is their different numbers of teeth. 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.

¹ Braulik G. T., I. Archer F., Khan U., et al. 2021. Taxonomic revision of the South Asian River dolphins (Platanista): Indus and Ganges River dolphins are separate species. *Maine Mammal Science*, 37: 1022–1059. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mms.12801>

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)

Interesting facts: The fish was adopted as the State fish of Tripura as per the proposal of ICAR-NBFGR. 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. It has made entry into ornamental fish market as well. The fish faces a risk of 'extinction in the wild' due to habitat deterioration and population over exploitation¹. Hence the captive breeding technique is being developed. In addition, the fish is a potential candidate species for aquaculture diversification program.



¹ Pradyut Biswas, Alok Kumar Jena and Soibam Khogen Singh. 2023. Conservation aquaculture of *Ompok bimaculatus* (Butter catfish), a near threatened catfish in India. *Aquaculture and Fisheries*, 8 (1): 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aaf.2022.04.007>.

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.

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)



Special cover released by the Department of Post, India

Interesting facts: 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. Its common name derived due to the presence of a long anal fin, which continues with the caudal fin giving

an appearance of a feather. 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. 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.

State Fish of West Bengal



Common names: Hilsa shad, Hilsa herring

Scientific name: *Tenulosa 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.

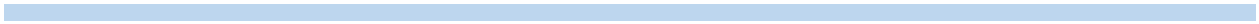
Distribution: Distributed in India (Rupnarayan, Hooghly, Mahanadi, Narmada and Godavari Rivers and

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)

Interesting facts: Hilsa contains high amount of n-3 fatty acids. The taste of Hilsa comes primarily from the oil in its fatty belly. In West Bengal and in Bangladesh, the fish is known as 'queen of fishes' and has great cultural importance. Notable success has been achieved in artificial fertilization and seed production of Hilsa in India. To aid its conservation, in 2013, the State Fisheries Department notified the stretches of the Hooghly River from Diamond Harbour to Nischchindapur, 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.





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