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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING
DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES

RAJYA SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 4210
TO BE ANSWERED ON 1st APRIL, 2026

Conservation of Indigenous fish species

4210# Dr. Bhim Singh:

Will the Minister of ***Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying*** be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of conservation of major indigenous fish species such as Rohu, Catla, Mrigal, Kalbasu, Mahseer, Singhi, Mangur etc found in the country and the number of the species which are declining; and
(b) the number of schemes being implemented by Government for the promotion, breeding, hatchery development and encouragement of farmers/fishermen for these indigenous fish and the benefits received through these schemes so far?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING

(SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH ALIAS LALAN SINGH)`

(a) and (b): The Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Government of India, has undertaken multiple initiatives for the conservation and enhancement of indigenous fish species including rohu, catla, mrigal, kalbasu, mahseer, singhi, and magur. Key measures under the PMMSY include establishment of brood banks to maintain and improve the quality of indigenous fish species through selective breeding and genetic improvement programs, integrated development of reservoirs with fish seed stocking, hatcheries, seed rearing ponds, and post-harvest infrastructure to enhance fish production and conserve resources, promotion and certification of organic aquaculture practices to ensure sustainable farming and conservation of native fish species, financial and nutritional support to traditional fishers during fishing ban/lean periods to conserve fishery resources. Further, the Department has prioritized and notified 10 indigenous fish species for focussed aquaculture development nationwide. These initiatives aim to sustainably enhance fish production while conserving indigenous fish species.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), proposals amounting to ₹274.84 crore have been approved for stocking 31.05 crore fingerlings in reservoirs and wetlands across States and Union Territories. Further, under the Central Sector component of PMMSY, river ranching proposals worth ₹39.02 crore have been sanctioned for releasing 1180.94 lakh fingerlings of rohu, catla, mrigal, brown trout, and other indigenous species into major river systems, including the Ganga and its tributaries, the Mahanadi, Brahmaputra and Barak distributaries, the Indus and associated rivers, the Cauvery and its tributaries, the Narmada system, and the Vainganga–Wardha rivers.

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has reported that Indian Major Carps (IMC), viz., rohu, catla, and mrigal, are well established in aquaculture, with standardized technologies for mass seed production and rearing. ICAR has also developed seed production and grow-out technologies for several indigenous minor carps and barbs (including *L. calbasu, L. fimbriatus, L. gonius, L. dussumieri, L. bata, Cirrhinus reba*, *Osteobrama belangeri*, and Deccan barbs such as *Hipselobarbus* spp.), catfishes (magur, singhi, pabda, *Pangasius pangasius*), murrels (giant and striped), koi, and freshwater prawns. For the golden mahseer (*Tor putitora*), an endangered Himalayan species of high ecological value, ICAR-CICFR has developed captive maturation and year-round breeding technologies to support mass seed production for conservation.

ICAR has also reported that under the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), with financial support from the Ministry of Jal Shakti, ICAR-CIFRI is implementing the project "Fish Conservation and Stock Enhancement of Fisheries of Ganga River Basin (Phase-III)" to replenish native species such as rohu, catla, mrigal, mahseer, sarana, chital, scampi, and bata. Through 173 ranching programmes, a total of 205 lakh seeds have been released. Besides, efforts are also underway to restore Indian Major Carps and hilsa above the Farakka Barrage; to date, 1.22 lakh adult hilsa, 39.5 lakh fertilized eggs, and 0.57 lakh spawns have been released. Notably, river ranching has yielded measurable benefits: IMC landings at Prayagraj increased by 24.70%, while landings at Varanasi rose from 2.90 tonnes in 1959–60 to 4.09 tonnes in 2023, reflecting a 41.03% increase. ICAR-National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources (ICAR-NBFGR), Lucknow, with support of "*Namami Gange"* through ICAR-CIFRI. ICAR-NBFGR has also undertaken stock enhancement of key carp species, viz. catla, rohu, mrigal, kalbasu, and bata, by ranching over 12.5 lakh fingerlings at six locations along the Ganga (Bithoor, Etawah, Farrukhabad, Pratapgarh, and Kannauj) over the past five years. The institute maintains live germplasm comprising over 1500 riverine brooders of IMC, 520 singhi, and 150 magur to support conservation programmes. To address inbreeding and asynchronous maturation, cryopreserved rohu milt has been supplied to distant hatcheries. Since 2017, ICAR has also conducted awareness programmes for over 1,300 fishers along the Ganga to promote conservation of indigenous species, including Chitala.

A Nucleus Breeding Centre (NBC) has been established at ICAR-CIFA with support under PMMSY for strengthening the breeding programmes of freshwater fishes, including AhR-Jayanti rohu, CIFA-Amrit catla, and other high-value species. To facilitate the dissemination of genetically improved strains, ICAR-CIFA has entered into Memoranda of Understanding with 16 commercial hatcheries designated as authorized multiplier units across seven States.

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