

National Fish Farmers' Day – 2026

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National Fish Farmers' Day is observed across India every year on 10 July. The day commemorates the pioneering achievements of Dr. Hiralal Chaudhuri and Dr. K. H. Alikunhi, whose ground-breaking work in induced breeding technology laid the foundation for modern fish seed production in India. Besides recognizing these scientific milestones, the day also serves as a platform to promote awareness about fisheries and aquaculture and to deliberate on the future of sustainable fish production.



*Dr. Hiralal Chaudhuri
(1921-2014)*

livelihoods.

Today, the world faces major challenges related to food security, nutritional deficiencies, and livelihood opportunities. In this context, fisheries and aquaculture play an indispensable role. Globally, nearly 800 million people depend directly or indirectly on this sector for their

and earned a record ₹73,890 crore in foreign exchange. Fisheries have thus emerged as one of the major contributors to India's agricultural exports. However, despite this remarkable production, India's average annual per capita fish availability is only about 12.5 kg, whereas the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends an annual consumption of 23–24 kg per person. This clearly indicates the need to further increase fish production and domestic consumption.

India is also exceptionally rich in aquatic biodiversity. Nearly 3,250 fish species have been recorded from marine, freshwater, brackish water, and other aquatic ecosystems, making the country one of the world's biodiversity hotspots. The fisheries sector provides direct and indirect employment to nearly 28 million people, significantly contributing to the nation's economy.



*Dr. Kollyil Hameed Alikunhi
(1918-2010)*

India is one of the world's leading fish-producing nations. The country currently produces approximately 19.75 million tonnes (mt) of fish annually, of which 3.57 mt come from marine capture fisheries and 16.18 mt from aquaculture. India ranks second in the world in aquaculture production, with an impressive annual growth rate of nearly 8 percent.

India exports fish and fishery products to more than 75 countries. During the previous financial year, the country exported 1.97 mt of seafood (around 10% of the total fish production)

Karnataka possesses enormous potential for fisheries and aquaculture development. The state has a 343 km coastline, an Exclusive Economic Zone of nearly 27,000 sq. km, thousands of mechanized and traditional fishing vessels, 82 reservoirs, thousands of large and small tanks, and nearly 5.7 lakh hectares of water resources. Despite these abundant resources, their full potential has not yet been realized.

Karnataka currently produces around 1.0–1.1 mt of fish annually. Although production has

shown encouraging growth, the state's annual per capita fish consumption remains only 6.5–7.5 kg, which is considerably lower than the national average. Therefore, while increasing production remains important, equal emphasis must be placed on expanding domestic fish marketing and encouraging greater fish consumption.

To achieve this objective, priority should be given to expanding aquaculture, adopting scientific farming technologies, ensuring the availability of quality fish seed, improving feed management, and strengthening marketing infrastructure. Although Karnataka has made significant progress in fish production, there remains substantial untapped potential for further growth.

If farmers allocate even 1–5% of their agricultural land for fish farming, they can generate additional income while making better use of



available water resources. Saline and alkaline lands, farm ponds created for rainwater harvesting, and abandoned quarry ponds, clay pits formed during brick manufacturing can all be scientifically utilized for aquaculture. However, cultivation of the environmentally destructive and illegal African Catfish should never be undertaken under any circumstances.

Marine fisheries today face numerous challenges, including overfishing, the use of small-mesh fishing nets, illegal fishing practices,



environmental pollution, and climate change. Similarly, aquaculture faces rising production costs, inadequate availability of quality fish seed, and marketing constraints. These challenges can only be addressed through scientific research, effective public policies, and the active participation of fish farmers.

National Fish Farmers' Day is therefore not merely an occasion to recognize the importance of fisheries; it is also an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment towards sustainable, responsible, and environmentally friendly fish farming. Every fish farmer has the responsibility to balance economic profitability with environmental conservation.

The College of Fisheries, Mangalore, India's first fisheries college, has been serving the farming

community for over five decades through its departments of Aquaculture, Aquatic Environment Management, Aquatic Animal Health, Fish Processing Technology, Fisheries Engineering, and other specialized disciplines. The institution provides technical guidance, farmer training, soil and water testing, disease diagnosis and management, and several other scientific services.

The Government of India has launched the National Fisheries Digital Platform (NFDP) to bring all fish farmers under a single digital ecosystem and facilitate access to various incentives and support services under the *Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samruddhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY)*. Fish farmers, start-ups, entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders are encouraged to register on the platform and avail themselves of the benefits offered under the scheme. For guidance and assistance, interested persons may contact the PM-MKSSY Coordinator at the College of Fisheries, Mangalore.

On the occasion of National Fish Farmers' Day, the College of Fisheries, Mangalore, together with the Arabian Sea Fisheries Management Coordination Committee (SeaMC²), extends its heartfelt greetings and best wishes to all fish



farmers, fishermen, and everyone associated with the fisheries sector.