

Establishment of Maharashtra's First Murrel (*Channa striata*) Fish Hatchery and Awareness of Murrel Fish Culture for Livelihood at Ambegaon, Pune, under the Technical Guidance of ICAR-CIFE, Mumbai

The First Murrel Hatchery of Maharashtra was inaugurated at Bhimashankar Fisheries on 18 September 2026 at Kanase, Tal. Ambegaon, Dist. Pune, by Dr. N. P. Sahu, Director, ICAR-CIFE, Mumbai in the presence of dignitaries from the State Fisheries Department & Local Administration. The inauguration was held during an awareness programme on "Murrel Fish Breeding and Culture for Sustainable Livelihood". The hatchery was established with technical guidance from ICAR-CIFE, Mumbai, in collaboration with the Department of Fisheries, Government of Maharashtra. During the program, 80 farmers from different districts of Maharashtra participated.

Under the NASF-CCF-Young Scientist Project (YSP), Dr. Kiran D. Rasal, Senior Scientist, ICAR-CIFE, and his team conducted breeding and seed production trials of striped murrel (*Channa striata*) during July-August 2026. Using an improved peptide-based hormonal formulation for induced breeding, approximately 2.5 lakh hatchlings and 45,000 fingerlings were successfully produced. Further breeding trials are continuing for additional seed production. The programme highlighted the potential of murrel as a promising aquaculture species for species diversification and livelihood generation due to its fast growth, consumer demand and high market value. Mr. R. Borhade, Owner, Bhimashankar Hatchery, expressed deep gratitude for the technical support provided by ICAR-CIFE. Shri Vijay Shikhare, Regional Deputy Commissioner, Fisheries Department, Pune, appreciated the successful seed production and highlighted government schemes supporting fish culture and livelihood development. Dr. Aditya D. Deshpande, Scientist, ICAR-CIFE, emphasized that successful fingerling production depends heavily on overcoming the challenges of larval rearing. Mr. Dhanesh Padwal, SMS, KVK Narayangaon, assured further support for dissemination of the technology among farmers.

Around 50 to 60 farmers with farm ponds in the Pune region have been consistently requesting murrel fingerlings, but the lack of availability has led to underutilization of their ponds and limited aquaculture productivity. To address this gap, a dedicated murrel hatchery has now been inaugurated, ensuring a reliable supply of quality fingerlings. This initiative will meet farmers' immediate need of seed. With the hatchery's output, farmers will be able to fully utilize their farm ponds, enhance fish production, and collectively strengthen the regional diversified aquaculture ecosystem with livelihood generation.

Dr. N. P. Sahu, Director, ICAR-CIFE, appreciated the initiative and suggested developing a murrel cluster in the Pune region in collaboration with the Department of Fisheries, Government of Maharashtra. He emphasized the role of ICAR-CIFE in technology transfer, training and technical handholding for farmers and entrepreneurs. The inauguration of this hatchery marks an important step towards scientific murrel seed production and promotion of murrel culture for sustainable livelihoods in Maharashtra. The farmers actively participated in the discussion session and thanked ICAR-CIFE for guidance and immense support.



Inauguration of Maharashtra's First Murrel Hatchery by Dr. N. P. Sahu, Director, ICAR-CIFE, Mumbai





Murrel Brooders Tank & Hatchery Infrastructure



Fingerlings Rearing Pool



Healthy Murrel Brooder Stock



Distribution of Murrel fingerlings to the farmers