

## Conservation and livelihood development initiatives of ICAR-NBFGR at Karnataka and West Bengal; ranching of critically endangered fish endemic to Cauvery River

As a conservation initiative, ranching of young ones of *Hemibagrus punctatus*, locally known as *Kettalu menu*, a critically endangered and endemic fish, in Sivanasamudra Fish Sanctuary, Cauvery River, in collaboration with Wildlife Association of South India (WASI), Bangalore, Department of Fisheries, Karnataka. The species is critically endangered in IUCN Red List, warranting the need for developing breeding protocol of the species. ICAR-NBFGR developed captive propagation of the species and ranching programme of the young ones was carried out for the first time along their natural distribution 04 November 2024 in the Sivanasamudra fish sanctuary, Karnataka. Padmasree Dr. S. Ayyappan, Former Secretary, DARE & DG, ICAR was the chief guest of programme. He emphasized the importance of the event in conservation of this valuable resource in long run and asked for more networking for effective implementation. Dr Uttam Kumar Sarkar, Director of the institute indicated the role of the ranching programme for stock enhancement and sustainable utilisation of the species in Cauvery river. A total of 50 fishers and fish farmers were participated in the event. Dr V.S.Basheer & Dr Charan Ravi, scientists of the bureau coordinated the event.



An input distribution event for fishers under the SCSP component of the institute was also organised during the occasion. Coracles and fishing nets were provided to the 10 fishers of the region for livelihood development. Earlier, a similar programme was organised under the STC Scheme of the Institute at Farakka, West Bengal on 02 November 2024 in collaboration with Hemnagar Sundarban Dream, West Bengal. A total of 50 fish farmers, including 40 women participated in the programme. During the program, farmers received various inputs such as high value catfish (singhi) fingerlings, cast net, and fish carrier (handi) in the presence of Dr U.K. Sarkar, Director of the institute.

