



Marine Fisheries Census 2025 Goes Fully Digital; VYAS Apps to Enable Real-Time, Geo-Referenced Data Collection

Union MoS Shri George Kurian Urges Fishermen to Register on NFDP Portal; Highlights the Role of Technology in Transforming Fisheries

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Union Minister of State, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Shri George Kurian launched the Marine Fisheries Census (MFC) 2025 Household Enumeration and the VYAS – BHARAT and VYAS- SUTRA app in Kochi today. The launch of MFC 2025 marks a complete and historic digital transformation of the national enumeration process. Moving entirely from conventional paper-based methods, it is poised to generate the most comprehensive, granular, and geo-referenced national database to date, laying a robust foundation for evidence-based planning. **Shri George Kurian while addressing the stakeholders said that the government is actively installing various scientific devices like transponders and turtle excluder devices etc., free of cost for the benefit of the fishermen. He urged the fishermen, fish farmers etc. to register on the NFDP portal to get various benefits from the government.**

MFC 2025: Historic Digital Leap and Tech Focus to Power Fisher folk Welfare

Paradigm Shift: Fully Digital and Geo-Referenced Census: The MFC–2025 represents a dramatic leap forward from its predecessors (e.g., 2005, 2010, 2016). The entire enumeration of approximately 1.2 million fisher households across 5,000 villages/habitations in 13 coastal States and Union Territories, including the Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep, will be fully digital and paperless.

Enumeration Period: The core household data collection is scheduled for an extended period of 45 days, from 3 November to 18 December 2025.

Digital Architecture: The process is powered by a suite of custom-made, multilingual Android applications—VyAS–NAV (for validation of fishing villages and harbours), VyAS–BHARAT (household and infrastructure enumeration) and VyAS–SUTRA (for real-time supervision and monitoring of households and enumerators) developed by the nodal agency, the ICAR–Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI).

Efficiency and Accuracy: This digital approach enables real-time, geo-referenced data collection, eliminating manual errors and significantly accelerating data processing.

Supervision and Oversight: The entire operation is monitored through multi-tier web dashboards and a supervisory app, ensuring real-time progress tracking, data accuracy, and accountability across all levels of census management.

Comprehensive Preparations and Tech Integration: The preparatory phase for the MFC–2025 has been extensive, including pre-census workshops and high-level coordination meets, such as the Coastal States Fisheries Meet 2025. A crucial National Workshop for final operational strategy and coordination held at the ICAR–CMFRI in Kochi today. Parallel to the census, the Department of Fisheries and CMFRI are championing the adoption of drone technology to enhance transparency and efficiency in marine fisheries data collection. Drones have been deployed to conduct aerial enumeration of fishing crafts during trawl ban periods. This includes major harbours on the East Coast—Vizag, Kakinada, and Tuticorin (April to June)—and key landing centres on the West Coast—Mangaluru, Beypore, and Puthiyappa (June to July). Crafts of various types (mechanised, motorized—onboard, and motorized—outboard) were counted using drone-based aerial shots, serving as a neutral and verifiable source to support ground-level data collection.

Granular Data for Targeted Welfare: The scope of the MFC–2025 has been significantly expanded to capture a deep, granular understanding of the socio-economic status of the coastal population, ensuring future government interventions are more precise and impactful.

Expanded Socio-economic Data: For the first time, the enumeration includes detailed information on crucial indicators like total family income, homeownership, outstanding liabilities, and sources of credit.

Focus on Vulnerability: Vital data will be gathered on insurance status, major losses or disabilities, the specific socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on fisher families, and the receipt of benefits from schemes like PMMSY/PM-MKSSY.

Institutional Mapping: New schedules focusing on Fish Farmer Producer Organizations (FFPOs) and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are introduced to facilitate collectivization and strengthen the value chain.

Background

The National Marine Fisheries Census 2025 (MFC 2025), a coast-wide activity fully funded by the Department of Fisheries, Government of India, and ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) as the nodal agency and Fishery Survey of India (FSI) as the operational partner. The fifth edition of the Marine Fisheries Census will cover over 1.2 million households across 5,000 marine fishing villages. The hallmark of this activity is household-level enumeration of fishers, fishing crafts, gears, and infrastructure across 1,200+ landing centres, 50 fishing harbours, jetties, markets, and processing plants with the help of specially designed mobile-based applications. MFC 2025, whose slogan is ‘Smart Census, Smarter Fisheries’ will facilitate better targeting of the PM-MKSSY allocations and infrastructure upgrades. This wealth of new information will be the evidentiary bedrock for refining welfare programs and designing targeted, climate-resilient, and inclusive development strategies for the fishing community. The MFC–2025 is truly setting a new benchmark for data-driven fisheries governance in India and will help in community-led growth, fostering entrepreneurship among women and youth in coastal ecosystems.

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