

Catch limits for fishing

Posted On: 11 FEB 2026 3:12PM by PIB Delhi

The ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) has recommended the minimum legal size for the commercially important species including pomfret. Based on such recommendations, advisories are issued to the States/UTs to implement measures to prevent juvenile fishing, such as mesh-size regulations and minimum legal sizes for fish under their Marine Fishing Regulation Acts (MFRAs), to ensure sustainable and responsible fishing practices. States like Kerala and Maharashtra have notified minimum legal size for the fishes, including pomfrets. ICAR-CMFRI conducts periodic stock assessments of marine fisheries resources including pomfrets along the Indian coast. The most recent stock status assessment from 2023 was published in the Marine Fish Stock Status (MFSS) Report, 2022. As per this report, about 91.1% of India's Marine Fish Stocks are in a healthy condition.

Under the Marine Fishing Regulation Acts (MFRAs) of coastal States, specific zones are reserved exclusively for traditional, non-mechanised, or small-scale motorized boats. Some states have prohibited mechanised fishing vessels from operating in these "traditional zones.". Recognizing the decline in Silver Pomfret (*Pampus argenteus*) stocks, the Government of Maharashtra recently declared it the 'State Fish' to focus conservation efforts. Minimum Legal Size (MLS) regulations (e.g., 135-140 mm for Silver Pomfret) have been notified to prevent the catching of juveniles in breeding grounds. Further, the Government of India has prohibited destructive fishing methods such as **Bull/Pair Trawling** and the use of **LED lights** for fishing in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and have issued advisories to the States to implement such measures in the territorial waters. Besides, to protect fish during their peak breeding season, a uniform **61-day annual fishing ban** has been in operation on both east and west coast of India.

Assistance is provided under PMMSY to socio-economically backward and active traditional fisher families during the annual fishing ban/lean period. Assistance of ₹3,000 per beneficiary per year is provided by the Government, with a beneficiary contribution of ₹1,500, and the accumulated amount of ₹4,500 is released during the three-month ban period. Further, to enhance availability of fishery resources in the coastal areas including traditional fishing zones, the State Governments have deployed Artificial Reefs with funding support under the PMMSY.

This answer was given by Union Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairy Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh in reply to a question asked in the Rajya Sabha today.

JP
