

FSI National Workshop Begins in Mumbai to Develop Marine Mammal Conservation Roadmap for 2027–2032

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The Fishery Survey of India (FSI) today began a two-day National Workshop on “Marine Mammal Conservation: Science, Fisheries & Community Action” at the World Trade Centre, Mumbai. The workshop aims to develop a national action plan for marine mammal conservation for the period 2027–2032 and strengthen scientific information on marine mammals in India’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

The workshop was inaugurated by Dr. Ravikiran Govekar, IFS, Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Wildlife (West). Dr. Sanjay Pandey, Deputy Commissioner (Fisheries), was the Guest of Honour. Dr. Sreenath K. R., Director General, FSI, presided over the inaugural session. Dr. Mahesh Kumar Farejiya and Dr. Sijo P. Varghese, Deputy Directors General, FSI, also addressed the gathering.



The Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal are home to 33 species of marine mammals. All these species receive the highest level of legal protection under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. However, information on deep-sea populations and marine mammal bycatch in fishing operations remains limited.

The workshop brings together fisheries scientists, marine mammal experts, enforcement agencies, conservation organizations and representatives of fishing communities. The discussions are focused on three key areas: improved monitoring of marine mammals, measures to reduce accidental catch in fishing operations, and greater participation of fishing communities in conservation efforts.



Modern methods such as Passive Acoustic Monitoring, environmental DNA (e-DNA) and satellite telemetry will be discussed for monitoring marine mammal populations. The workshop will also consider improved fishing gear, Bycatch Reduction Devices and acoustic deterrents to reduce accidental capture of dolphins, whales and other marine mammals.

Community-based measures, including local stranding response networks and citizen science initiatives, will also form an important part of the deliberations. The Jalchar app developed by the Bombay Natural History Society (BHNS), Mumbai, will be discussed as a tool for reporting and responding to stranded marine animals.

The workshop will conclude on 26 September 2026 with discussions aimed at developing a coordinated national framework for marine mammal conservation and sustainable fisheries.

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