



National Workshop on Marine Mammal Conservation Concludes in Mumbai with Draft 2027–2032 Action Plan

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The two-day National Workshop on “Marine Mammal Conservation: Science, Fisheries & Community Action,” hosted by the Fishery Survey of India (FSI), successfully concluded today at the World Trade Centre, Mumbai. The landmark summit culminated in the presentation of draft recommendations designed to shape India’s 2027–2032 Marine Mammal Science and Conservation roadmap. Today’s final sessions focused on the vital intersection of active fisheries, bycatch mitigation, and grassroots community stewardship. The morning session addressed the critical need to implement Bycatch Reduction Devices (BRDs) and gear modifications across artisanal and industrial fleets. Experts from MPEDA and ICAR-CIFT presented active mitigation strategies necessary for minimizing megafauna casualties and maintaining compliance with international seafood market regulations, while Dr. Dipani Sutaria highlighted marine mammals as key indicators of climate-driven ocean health.

Shifting focus to grassroots involvement, the session IV, chaired by Dr. Sijo P Varghese, DDG(Fy), FSI, highlighted the power of citizen science and local stranding networks. Key innovations showcased included the Jalchar application for marine megafauna spotting, presented by Dr. Tejal Vijapure of BNHS, showcased how this citizen-reporting platform empowers local fishers to submit real-time GPS locations, timestamps, and photographs of marine megafauna, urging expanded institutional collaboration to widen its coverage. Addressing on-the-ground rescue operations, Shri Sajan John of the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) detailed rapid intervention protocols, emphasizing the critical role of veterinary care, rescue capacity training, and coordinated action with government departments.

Expanding on institutional synergy, Shri Shripad Goenka of MMCOI underscored the importance of outreach and the wider public dissemination of scientific data to foster conservation. Focusing on regional challenges, Dr. Manas Manjrekar of the Mangrove Foundation outlined Maharashtra's ongoing conservation efforts, advocating for long-term monitoring to effectively combat localised threats such as marine pollution. The consensus of the session affirmed that timely reporting, rapid response, and deep community participation are the bedrock of marine mammal conservation along the Indian coast.



The summit officially closed with a Valedictory Session chaired by FSI Director General Dr. Sreenath K. R., solidifying a unified national framework dedicated to rigorous stock assessment, responsible fishing practices, and safeguarding marine biodiversity within the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

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