



Asian seabass farming: Brainstorming workshop and training in India

Brainstorming workshop

A one-day brainstorming workshop to discuss the development of Asian seabass *Lates calcarifer* farming in India was organized at the Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture (CIBA) at Chennai on 29 August 2008.

Dr. P. Krishnaiah, Chief Executive, National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) inaugurated the Workshop. Shri Shambhu Kallollikar, I.A.S., Commissioner of Fisheries, Govt. of Tamil Nadu presided over the function as Chief Guest. Dr. A.G. Ponniah, Director of CIBA, welcomed the gathering. The workshop was facilitated by Dr. A.R.T. Arasu, Head, Fish Culture Division of CIBA and his team.

The workshop was attended by about 100 participants from aquaculture sector including the farmers from the states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, and Orissa, policy makers, administrators, officials from the State Departments of Fisheries of Tamil Nadu, Orissa and Gujarat, the Marine Products Development Authority (MPEDA), Government of India, Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Aquaculture (RGCA) and the scientists of CIBA, Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) and other organizations. Key note addresses on the seed production of Asian seabass under controlled conditions, feed development and intensive culture of Asian seabass in pond based cages were delivered by the experts from CIBA, RGCA and MPEDA.

The discussion that followed the presentations was mainly focused on the availability of quality seed and cost effective feed. Farmers wanted to have a reasonable price for their produce that rewarded their investment and effort. It was also felt that although the intensive farming is technically viable, investment costs should be reduced and market linkages standardized.

Outcomes of the workshop

CIBA will take up demonstrations of seabass culture in farms of 1 or 2 ha minimum at three centres: two on the east coast i.e., Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, and one in the west coast which will be funded by NFDB.



Above and below: The workshop and hands-on training.



Entrepreneurs and farmers interested in seabass farming may also submit a proposal detailing their requirements. The NFDB will explore the possibilities of supporting such programmes within its norms.

Information on intensive cage farming in ponds may also be consolidated and the technologically and economically viable proposals may be also worked out.

The relative economic viability of different farming systems may also be examined and suitable protocols with the technical and economic details prepared as a package to assist farmers to adopt seabass culture.

Farmers who are interested to offer their facilities for demonstrations may do so in consultation with CIBA / RGCA.

Seed rearing centres can also be strengthened which can work as nursery centres to supply larger fingerlings for stocking, so that the culture duration can be reduced.

All stakeholders agreed that they should cooperate to have mutual, open dialogues at frequent intervals and be involved in evaluation of farming trials.

Training

A 10 days training programme on the Asian seabass breeding and culture was organized at CIBA, Chennai during 20-29 August 2008. It was attended by fifteen participants including farmers, scientists from CMFRI, Kochi, and Central Agricultural Research Institute (ICAR), Port Blair, Andamans, a lecturer from University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, officers from MATSYAFED and Central Institute of Fisheries Nautical Engineering and Training, Kerala, consultants from Andhra Pradesh, officials from State Fisheries Department,



Government of Orissa and technical staff from Annamalai University. The training provided hands on exposure to the participants on the seed production under controlled conditions and culture of seabass.

Comparative study for broodstock management of grey mullet (*Mugil cephalus* L.) in cages and earthen ponds with hormone treatment

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The grey mullet *Mugil cephalus* is a commercially important fish in the Bay of Bengal, locally known as khorul bata, commonly found in coastal and offshore waters of Bangladesh. It is caught in large quantities from shallow fishing grounds¹.

The grey mullet is available in the Bakkhali River estuary during their breeding season from October to December, where salinity may range from 0 to 35ppt. Broodstock of grey mullet are not well utilized in the coastal area of Bangladesh. Local fishers generally catch them with seine nets and sell them in the local market for human consumption without realizing the actual importance of grey mullet broodstock for hatchery operation.

Marine finfish hatchery techniques are not well developed in Bangladesh due to the lack of technical knowhow. Collection of the naturally produced fry of grey mullet is not popular and as a result there is limited seed available and farmers are not interested to develop mullet farming in coastal areas. The development of breeding technology for this species including through the proper management of broodstock would, however, open up new opportunities. The objective of this study was to develop breeding and hatchery technology for grey mullet using hormone treatment.



Harvesting grey mullet and other species from net and cages.

Materials and methods

Samridhi Multipurpose Aquaculture Farm and Fish Research Center (SMAFRC) and Bakkhali Associates' farm were selected for the study. Both research stations are private initiatives, located at Jilwanja, Cox's Bazar, about two km away, towards north-west of the Cox's Bazar bus terminal, on the left bank of the Bakkhali river estuary. The research work was conducted in two study area in the months of June to December, 2005.