

Ornamental Fisheries in India

What is ornamental fish? The varied forms and fascinating beauty of some fish have attracted the people from time immemorial and are named as 'Ornamental Fish'. These include both classified and non-classified type of aquarium fish.

Classified Fishes: The fishes that can be reared in aquaria throughout their life span Ex., *Botia dario*, *Danio dangila*, *Badis badis*, *Pethia shalynius*, *Colisa lalia*

Non-classified Fishes: The food fishes that are used in aquaria during their juvenile stage. Ex., *Chitala chitala*, *Labeo calbasu*, *Neolissochilus hexagonolepis*, *Labeo gonius*, *Channa marulius*

RESOURCES

Inland and marine waters in India possess a rich diversity of ornamental fish. A total of 1539 species of ornamental fishes are traded worldwide where India offers more than 374 fresh water ornamental fish species and near about 700 marine ornamental fish species. Besides, in ornamental fish sector about 288 freshwater exotic fish and 300 marine exotic fish are being used.

The major fish exported from India are of wild varieties collected from rivers of the North-East and Southern States that contribute about 85% to the total export of all types of ornamental fish from the country. Among the 195 reported fish species from the North-East Region, 155 species are of ornamental value. The region also exhibits exceptional biodiversity and high degree of endemism with respect to freshwater ornamental fishes. Prominent among them are Loaches, Eels, Barbs, Catfish, and Goby. On the other hand, the Western Ghats of India is one of the 34 'Biodiversity Hotspot' Areas of the World. Among the total freshwater fishes reported from the Western Ghats, 40 are of ornamental value of which 37 species are endemic to the Western Ghats.

Brackishwater ornamental fishes such as *Monodactylus argenteus*, *M. sebae* and *Scatophagus argus* are common in Indian waters and they could be collected, reproduced cultured and traded. The Pearl-spot (*Etroplus suratensis*) Orange Chromid (*E. maculatus*) and Indian Glassfish *Ambassis* sp. have been successfully bred in low saline fishponds.

Marine ornamental fish are widely collected from the coral reef habitats throughout the Indo-Pacific region. The marine aquarium trade has developed into a vibrant multimillion-dollar industry offering livelihood prospects to people who depend on the coral reef ecosystems. Potential marine ornamental fish species resources are Clown Fish, Damsel Fish, Moorish Idol, Lion Fish, Parrot Fishes, Box Fishes or Trunk Fishes, Marine Angels, Butterfly Fish, Cleaner Wrasse, Cardinal Fishes, Sergeant Fishes/ Unicorn Fish, Rabbit Fish, Squirrel Fish, Scorpion Fish, Blennies, Sand-smelt Fish and Seahorse.

Indian ornamental fish trade mostly deals with freshwater fish (90%) of which 98% are cultured and 2% are captured from wild. The remaining 10% are marine fishes of which 98% are captured and 2% culture. Majority of the Ornamental Fish Breeders in India breed exotic fishes and very few breed indigenous, marine and brackish water fish. Goldfish has the highest preference among hobbyists and hence its breeding dominates the Indian Ornamental Fish Sector. Apart from the common Live-bearer varieties, breeders prefer to breed highly specialized varieties such as Oscar, Flower Horn, Tetras, Discus and Cichlids.

Indigenous Freshwater Ornamental Fishes



Puntius arulius



Puntius filamentosus



Aplocheilus panchax



Amblypharyngodon mola



Channa orientalis



Garra gotyla gotyla



Gonoproktopterus curmuca



Macrogathus aral



Nandus nandus



Notopterus notopterus



Horabagrus brachysoma



Mystus vittatus

Indigenous Marine Ornamental Fishes



Pomacentrus caeruleus



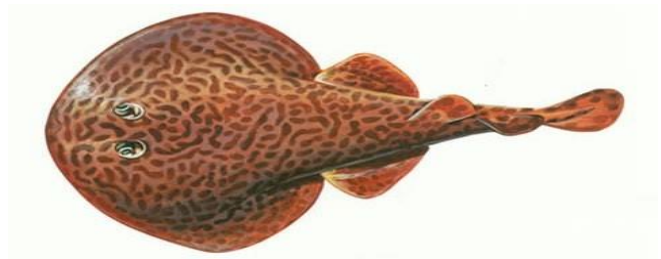
Ostracion cubicus



Scarus ghobban



Odonus niger



Narcine timlei



Chelonodon patoca









Thalassoma lunare







Abudefduf saxatilis

Commercially Important Ornamental Fishes Cultured in India

a. Freshwater Ornamental Fishes

	
Goldfish	Koi Carp
	
Guppy	Molly
	
Barbs	Gourami

b. Marine Ornamental Fishes

	
Damsel fish	Clownfish
	
Moorish Idol	Rabbitfish