

World Fisheries Day 2024, Theme, History, Significance, Date

November 21, 2024 • vajiramandravi.com

World Fisheries Day, observed annually on November 21, underscores the importance of sustainable fisheries, the preservation of aquatic ecosystems, and the well-being of fishing communities. It aims to raise awareness about critical issues like overfishing, habitat destruction, and illegal fishing while emphasizing the need to empower small-scale fishers, who often belong to marginalized communities worldwide.

The day traces its roots to 1997, when the World Forum of Fish Harvesters & Fish Workers was founded in New Delhi, India. Delegates from 18 countries came together to establish the World Fisheries Forum, advocating for sustainable fishing practices and policies on a global scale.

Importance of Fisheries in India

India holds a key position in the global fisheries sector, ranking as the 3rd largest fish producer and the 2nd largest in aquaculture after China. As the world's leading shrimp producer, India plays a vital role in ensuring domestic food security while contributing significantly to the global seafood market. The sector provides livelihoods to nearly 30 million people, primarily in coastal and rural areas.

India's fisheries industry has undergone a notable transformation, shifting from marine-based fisheries to a focus on inland fisheries. This transition, coupled with the move from capture fisheries to culture-based aquaculture, has been instrumental in driving the nation's blue economy, fostering both sustainability and economic growth.

World Fisheries Day Theme for 2024

The theme for this year's celebration, "India's Blue Transformation: Strengthening Small-Scale and Sustainable Fisheries," highlights India's dedication to promoting inclusive growth and sustainable practices within the fisheries sector. It underscores the importance of empowering small-scale fishers while ensuring environmental sustainability and the long-term viability of aquatic ecosystems.

World Fisheries Day 2024 Celebrations and Initiatives

The Department of Fisheries (DoF), under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying (MoFAH&D), will spearhead the celebrations on November 21, 2024, at Sushma Swaraj Bhawan, New Delhi. The event will be presided over by the Union Minister Shri Rajiv Ranjan Singh, alias Lalan Singh.

A series of groundbreaking initiatives will be launched to drive advancements in fisheries and ensure sustainable development:

1. **5th Marine Fisheries Census:** This initiative aims to gather comprehensive data on marine resources, providing a solid foundation for evidence-based policymaking.
2. **National Plan of Action (NPOA) on Sharks:** Focused on conserving shark species, the plan seeks to address overexploitation and ensure their ecological balance.
3. **Bay of Bengal-Regional Plan of Action (BoB-RPOA):** A strategic framework to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the Bay of Bengal region, fostering regional cooperation.
4. **IMO-FAO GloLitter Partnership Project:** This project aims to tackle marine plastic pollution, contributing to cleaner oceans and healthier marine biodiversity.
5. **Retrofitted LPG Kits:** Energy-efficient LPG kits will be introduced for fishing vessels, promoting eco-friendly practices while reducing operational costs.
6. **Single Window System for Coastal Aquaculture:** A streamlined online registration process will simplify administrative procedures for coastal aquaculture farms, encouraging more participation.
7. **Voluntary Carbon Market Framework:** This innovative mechanism will integrate carbon trading into the fisheries sector, offering incentives for sustainable practices while addressing climate change.

Technical Sessions

The event will feature in-depth technical sessions on pressing topics:

- **South-South and Triangular Cooperation:** Discussions will center on strengthening international partnerships for sustainable fisheries and global food security.
- **Climate Change Challenges in Fisheries:** Experts will explore mitigation strategies and emerging opportunities like carbon credit mechanisms, marine plastic management, and advanced traceability systems to enhance the sustainability of fisheries.

World Fisheries Day 2024 Awards and Recognition

To celebrate excellence in the fisheries sector, awards will be presented to progressive states/UTs, visionary individuals, and innovative entrepreneurs for their contributions to the growth and sustainability of Indian fisheries and aquaculture. These recognitions aim to inspire further efforts in transforming the sector and achieving India's blue economy goals.

This year's World Fisheries Day highlights India's proactive steps towards ensuring that its fisheries sector thrives sustainably while empowering small-scale fishers and contributing to global ecological and economic well-being.

India's Global Leadership in Fisheries

India has emerged as a global leader in fisheries, with the sector recognized as a "sunrise industry" that plays a vital role in the global food system. The country holds the distinction of being the 3rd largest fish producer in the world, the 2nd largest aquaculture nation, and the largest shrimp producer globally. These achievements underscore India's significant contributions to global seafood markets and domestic food security, cementing its position as a key player in the fisheries sector.

Growth in Fish Production

India's fisheries industry has witnessed remarkable growth, transitioning from being marine-dominated to deriving 70% of total fish production from inland fisheries. This shift has been driven by:

- **Aquaculture Productivity:** A growing emphasis on culture-based practices has significantly enhanced aquaculture yields.
- **Brackish and Saline Aquaculture:** India has seen substantial growth in shrimp farming while exploring the untapped potential of saline aquaculture zones to further diversify production.

Major Government Schemes and Policies for Fisheries

India's fisheries sector has been bolstered by several key government schemes aimed at enhancing productivity, exports, and sustainability:

1. **Blue Revolution Integrated Development and Management Fisheries Scheme (2015-16):** Focused on marine and inland fisheries, this scheme sought to increase fish production and productivity across the country.
2. **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY):** Launched in 2020, PMMSY aims to double fisheries exports to ₹1 lakh crore and create 55 lakh jobs. The scheme targets increasing aquaculture productivity from 3 tonnes/ha to 5 tonnes/ha, ensuring sustainable growth in the sector.
3. **Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF):** Established in 2018-19, this fund provides financial assistance for fisheries infrastructure projects, offering up to 3% interest subvention to promote development.
4. **ICAR-Central Institute of Fisheries Education (CIFE):** A Centre of Excellence since 1961, CIFE has trained over 4,000 fisheries professionals, focusing on research and capacity building to foster sustainable aquaculture practices.

Promoting Sustainable Fishing in India

India's commitment to sustainability in fisheries is reflected in several regulatory and conservation measures:

- **National Policy on Marine Fisheries (NPMF, 2017):** A framework to ensure the sustainability of marine fisheries through balanced exploitation and conservation.
- **Fishing Ban:** A 61-day monsoon ban is enforced to allow fish stocks to replenish, ensuring long-term ecological balance.
- **Prohibition of Destructive Practices:** Practices like pair trawling, LED lights, and bull trawling are banned to prevent overexploitation and habitat destruction.
- **Sea Ranching and Artificial Reefs:** These initiatives promote sustainable fishing practices while enhancing marine biodiversity.

Climate Resilience in Fisheries

India is actively addressing the challenges posed by climate change in the fisheries sector through innovative strategies:

- **Developing cold-water fisheries in Himalayan regions** to diversify production.

- Promoting high-value products such as omega-rich trout to boost export potential.
- Implementing mitigation strategies to combat climate change impacts, including investments in resilient infrastructure and resource management.

Investments in the Sector

The fisheries sector has received unprecedented financial support, with the Department of Fisheries allocating ₹2,584.50 crore for FY 2024-25, marking a 15% increase over the previous year. This funding supports:

- Expanding inland fisheries and diversifying aquaculture practices.
- Infrastructure development under PMMSY and FIDF to enhance capacity and efficiency.
- Research and technology advancements to ensure sustainable aquaculture and address emerging challenges.

India's fisheries sector continues to exemplify a balance between growth, sustainability, and inclusivity, reinforcing its position as a global leader in fisheries and aquaculture.

World Fisheries Day 2024 FAQs

Q1. What is the theme of the 2024 Fisheries Day?

Ans. "India's Blue Transformation: Strengthening Small-Scale and Sustainable Fisheries."

Q2. Why is World Fisheries Day celebrated?

Ans. It is celebrated to highlight the importance of sustainable fisheries and support for fishing communities globally.

Q3. What is the theme of National Fish Farmers Day 2024?

Ans. The theme for National Fish Farmers Day 2024 has not been officially announced yet.

Q4. What is World Fisheries Day?

Ans. World Fisheries Day is an annual event to raise awareness about sustainable fishing practices, aquatic ecosystem protection, and the livelihoods of fishers.

Q5. When is World Fisheries Day celebrated?

Ans. World Fisheries Day is celebrated on November 21 every year.

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/world-fisheries-day-2/>

© Vajiram & Ravi. For personal use only.