

# Fisheries body 'can mass-produce' orange-spotted grouper seeds

OUR BUREAU

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The Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) has succeeded in mass seed production of orange-spotted grouper (*Epinephelus coioides*), a fish species enjoying high demand in the market.

Hatchery seed production of the species, carried out by the

Vishakapatnam Regional Centre of CMFRI, is expected to boost sea-cage-culture enterprises. The orange-spotted grouper is a commercially important carnivorous fish with high demand in many overseas markets.

According to Shubhadeep Ghosh, senior scientist at the Vishakapatnam Regional Centre, the initial success in seed

production was achieved in 2014, but the survival rate of the larvae was very low. After manipulating water quality and feeding protocols, an enhanced survival rate was achieved.

The larvae are now in advanced stage with a size of around 3 cm after 42 days of rearing in the hatchery, and ready to be transferred for nursery rear-

ing. Later, the fingerlings can be used for mariculture in grow-out cages, he said.

## Major breakthrough

Stating that the initiative is a major breakthrough in the mariculture business, Gopalakrishnan, CMFRI Director, said the success in seed production has raised hopes for mariculture of the fish

using hatchery-produced seeds.

The development will widen the scope for mariculture, helping fish farmers carry out sea-cage culture of the species and opening a good business opportunity for farmers and exporters.

In most of the major landing centres, the fish fetches ₹400-450/kg in the wholesale market. Live fish in international mar-

kets fetch prices that are three to four times higher, said Gopalakrishnan.

Orange-spotted grouper is available globally but predominantly in tropical and sub-tropical waters and is the mainstay in the world Live Reef Food Fish trade, particularly in several Asian countries. In India, it is found both on the East and West coasts.

