

CMFRI succeeds in seed production of orange spotted grouper

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KOCHI: The [Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute](#) (CMFRI) has succeeded in the mass scale seed production of [orange spotted grouper](#) (*Epinephelus coioides*), a highly demanded [fish species](#) in the market. The achievement is the first of its kind in India. The hatchery seed production of the species, carried by the [Vishakapatnam](#) Regional Centre of CMFRI, is expected to boost the [sea cage culture](#) enterprises in the country. The orange spotted grouper is a commercially important carnivorous fish with high market demand in many parts of the world. Dr. [Shubhadeep Ghosh](#), Senior Scientist at Vishakapatnam said that the institute made this achievement after the continuous efforts of scientists and technical staff for the last two years to enhance the survival rate of the larvae. "Initial success in seed production of the fish was achieved in 2014, but the survival rate of the larvae was very low. After manipulating different water quality and feeding protocols, enhanced survival rate with 10% was achieved this time", he said. The larvae are now in advanced fry stage with a size of around 3 cm after 42 days of rearing in the hatchery and ready to be transferred to the nursery rearing. Later the fingerlings can be used for mariculture in grow-out cages, he said.

High Scope for Mariculture

Dr Gopalakrishnan, CMFRI Director has said the success in seed production of orange spotted grouper has raised a ray of hope for the mariculture of the fish using hatchery produced seeds in the country. "The development will generate enormous scope for mariculture helping the farmers to carry out sea cage culture of the species, opening a good business opportunity for fish farmers and exporters in the country. Orange spotted grouper is a potential species for mariculture because it is compatible to high temperature, hardy nature and tastier with high market value", he said.

"In most of the major fish landing centres, the fish fetches Rs 400-450/kg in wholesale market, whereas the live fish sale in international market fetches 3-4 times higher prices, indicating the prospects of mariculture of the species", Dr. Gopalakrishnan said.

To Meet FAO Demand

In the context that FAO demanding the species be cultured and produced one lakh tonne a year globally, the success in the seed production of the fish will help India to contribute significantly to the global production of the grouper, he added.

High Export Market

Orange spotted grouper is available globally but predominantly in the tropical and sub-tropical waters and it forms the mainstay in the world Live Reef Food Fish (LRFF) trade, particularly in several Asian countries such as Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia. Known as 'amur', the groupers are highly demanded in the Middle East countries. In India, it is distributed in both east and west coasts.