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Excessive weed growth will disrupt the ecosystem of ponds and other freshwater resources. Among 140 species of aquatic weeds, varieties like salvinia, hydrilla and pistia are most detrimental to freshwater resources

- A Gopalakrishnan, CMFRI director

With new initiative, CMFRI to fish out aquatic weeds from waterbodies

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kochi

THE Ernakulam Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) of Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) is on to 'fishy' business to do some good.

What we mean is that on Wednesday, it launched an initiative of growing fishes in ponds to tackle the menace posed by excessive growth of aquatic weeds to the ecosystem of freshwater waterbodies.

The innovative step involves Grass Carp (Ctenopharyngodon idella), a freshwater fish which consumes aquatic weeds as feeds eliminating them from the freshwater resources.

CMFRI director A Gopalakrishnan launched the programme by releasing Grass Carp fingerlings into the Perunninakkulam Shiva temple pond in Tripunithura.

"Excessive weed growth will disrupt the ecosystem of ponds and other freshwater resources. Among 140 species of aquatic weeds, varieties like salvinia, hydrilla and pistia are most detrimental to freshwater resources," said Gopalakrishnan. He explained that a Grass Carp could consume weeds almost three times its own weight.

"Since it does not breed in ponds, its management is also easier," said Gopalakrishnan, who pointed out that using weedicides, the chemical compounds that eliminate weeds, could result in damage to fish stock and ecosystem.

"On the other hand, a one-acre pond infested with aquatic weeds only requires around 20 grass carps. Its fish seeds (fertilised fish eggs) are available in shops," he added.

KVK Head Dr Shinoj Subramannian and subject matter specialist (Fisheries) Dr Vikas P A also attended the launch.