

# Experts urge national plan to protect India's marine mammals and coastal biodiversity

Amid growing concerns about the challenges faced by marine mammals along India's coasts, experts called for the formulation of a National Plan of Action for Marine Mammal Conservation to ensure long-term protection of these ecologically significant species. The discussions also highlighted that CMFRI's research on marine mammals recently helped India clear a major hurdle in seafood exports to the United States.

A Bijukumar, Vice-Chancellor of Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies, who chaired the session, stressed the need for a national multi-institutional marine mammal network to coordinate research, monitoring, and conservation activities across the country.

India urgently needs a coordinated and well-funded conservation plan with defined roles for research institutions, enforcement agencies, and coastal communities, said CMFRI Director Grinson George. He underscored the importance of allowing qualified marine scientists and research institutes to handle stranded marine mammals and conduct post-mortem examinations (autopsies) to determine the causes of death.