

STATUS OF MAHASEER FISHERIES IN J&K STATE WITH REFERENCE TO ON GOING EFFORTS FOR REHABILITATION AND BREEDING OF FARM REARED MAHASEER(TOR PUTITORA)

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ABSTRACT

“Mahaseer” (Tor putitora) presently identified as threatened species throughout India has registered a decline in catches both in size and number in J&K State also, like other parts of the country. In Jammu division of J&K State, i.e. Chenab, Tawi and Ravi river systems the Mahaseer still exists in sufficient number yet, the size is showing a declining trend and the situation has become alarming. The causes for its decline have been identified as construction of Dams, Reservoirs, Degradations of environment by deforestation in catchment areas, construction of roads, railway line, irrigation canals, water supply schemes, mining, extraction of sand, bajari and boulders, availability of explosives and other means of indiscriminate Fishing and general degradations of ecological conditions besides over Fishing by Fishermen.

In Kashmir division i.e Jhelum river system the Mahaseer existed in large number up to early 1950's when it used to migrate from lower reaches of river Jhelum (Muzaffarabad area, now in POK) through Uri up to Boniyar and Wullar lake and was being caught up to Ninglee. Construction of Mangla Dam in Pakistan occupied Kashmir over river Jhelum blocked the migratory route of the Fish and in due course of time, the Fish has become extinct in Indian side of the Kashmir in Jhelum river system. Further, construction of lower Jhelum hydro electric project and Uri civil projects over the river Jhelum have changed the overall scenario and resulted into degradation of ecological condition for the Mahaseer. A large scale dredging of river Jhelum carried out recently has further changed the habitat and affected the breeding grounds of the fish. All these factors have made the rehabilitation of Mahaseer more difficult in the Jhelum river system.

The Department of Fisheries in J&K state has taken up number of possible conservation measures for the re-establishment of Mahaseer in the State.

In Jammu division an exclusive Mahaseer hatchery has already been established at Anji Fish Farm which has been successful in breeding of Farm reared Tor putitora by induced breeding since last two year. In Kashmir, efforts are on to identify and establish a similar Mahaseer hatchery/Farm and accordingly an appropriate site is being selected.

At Anji Mahaseer hatchery, Farm reared Mahaseer is being bred for the last two years. The Mahaseer Farm as well as hatchery is a running water system where a brood stock of T. putitora brooders have been maintained since 1995 which were fed with mustered oil cake and rice bran. On attaining an age of plus four years(+4) the brooders were given a single dose of Ovaprim @ 0.5 ml/kg to male & 1ml/kg to female during last week of September 1999, and September 2000, kept in circular breeding pool for 18-19 hours. During 1999, 13500 fertilized eggs & in Sept,2000, 25700 fertilized eggs were obtained by stripping & kept for hatching in hatching trays. A net harvest of 5000 Fry during 1999 & 13850 during 2000 was obtained. Efforts are now directed to achieve better survival rate and standardization of feed for juveniles, so that a large scale production of Mahaseer seed is taken up during the subsequent years.

** The paper was read at National work shop on the mighty Mahaseer(Bio diversity and genetic conservation) in August 2001 at Lonawala.*