



**Bata**  
(*Labeo bata*)

IUCN Red List: Least Concern; CITES: Not listed; IWPA, 1972: Not listed

Distributed throughout India, found in upper, middle and lower stretches of the Ganga River. The body is elongate, snout slightly projected beyond the mouth, often studded with pores. It is benthopelagic and potamodromous species. It is herbivorous and column feeder. Major threats to the species include loss of habitat and overexploitation.



**Spotted barb**  
(*Puntius sophore*)

IUCN Red List: Least Concern; CITES: Not listed; IWPA, 1972: Not listed

Distributed throughout India, found in upper, middle and lower stretches of the Ganga River. It inhabits plains and submontane regions. A dark spot is present at the tip of the tail and another at the base of dorsal fin rays. Breeds during monsoon, and during breeding period males develop a scarlet red band along the middle of both sides. Major threats to the species are loss of habitat and overexploitation.



**Bronze featherback**  
(*Notopterus notopterus*)

IUCN Red List: Least Concern; CITES: Not listed; IWPA, 1972: Not listed

Distributed throughout India and found in upper, middle and lower stretches of the Ganga River. Body highly compressed, color silvery-white with numerous fine gray spots on body and head. Carnivorous, feeds on insects, fish, crustaceans and young roots of aquatic plants. Breeds in stagnant or running water in the rainy season. Eggs are laid in small clumps on submerged vegetation. Major threats to the species include loss of habitat and overexploitation.

All the information and photographs are provided by Dr. Arvind Kumar Dwivedi

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[wii.gov.in/nmcg/national-mission-for-clean-ganga](http://wii.gov.in/nmcg/national-mission-for-clean-ganga)

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VIBRANT GANGA 



# fishes of ganga river



 भारतीय वन्यजीव संस्थान  
Wildlife Institute of India

Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation



Fishes play a unique role in regulating the trophic structure, transferring nutrients and maintaining ecological balance in the aquatic ecosystems. Freshwater fishes have also inspired art, literature and societies. Fish or the *Matsya* have been inscribed in the Hindu mythology as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu (*Matsya Avatar*), which symbolizes the restoration of true knowledge, subverted by egoism that has to be destroyed in the process.

Indian rivers and other freshwater ecosystems harbour around 756 freshwater fishes. The distinguished hydrology and geo-climatic condition in the upper, middle and lower stretches of Ganga River supports distinctive fish fauna. The Ganga River is home to more than 143 species of fish that belong to 11 orders, 72

genera and 32 families, which is about 20% of total freshwater fishes reported in India. The alteration in freshwater habitat of the Ganga River, its tributaries and wetlands due to loss of connectivity, hydrology alteration through dams and barrages, change in physio-chemical water quality and overexploitation has affected several fish species of the Ganga River.

The National Mission for Clean Ganga-Wildlife Institute of India's project "Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation" is a science-based species restoration programme, aiming at conservation of these fishes of the Ganga River.

The conservation status of the species are referred here as per International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) Red List, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) Appendices and Indian Wild Life Protection Act (IWPA), 1972 Schedules.

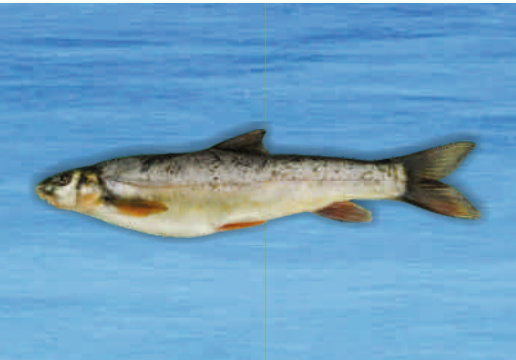


**Golden mahseer**

(*Tor putitora*)

IUCN Red List: Endangered; CITES: Not listed; IWPA, 1972: Not listed

The species has been reported across the Himalayan region and elsewhere in South and Southeast Asia. *Tor putitora* inhabits the montane and submontane regions, in streams and rivers, with rocky bottom, riverine pools and lakes. The fish is a column feeder in freshwater and in subtropical condition of 13°C - 30°C. It is omnivorous, feeds on insects, algae, macrophytes, rotifers, small fish, crustaceans, etc. This species is declining from its natural habitat due to urbanization, illegal encroachment, over-fishing and chemical and physical alterations of their natural habitats.



**Snow trout**

(*Schizothorax richardsonii*)

IUCN Red List: Vulnerable; CITES: Not listed; IWPA, 1972: Not listed

Distributed in the Himalayan rivers of India, the species is recorded from Uttarakhand, Nagaland and Jammu and Kashmir. Found in the upper stretches of the Ganga River. The body is streamlined and scales very small. Adults inhabit mountain streams and rivers, with rocky substrate. The species is a herbivore and feeds mainly on algae, aquatic plants and detritus. Introduction of exotic fish species, damming and overfishing are the major threats to the species.



**Silver Mahseer**

(*Tor tor*)

IUCN: Near Threatened; CITES: Not listed; IWPA, 1972: Not listed

Distributed in the Himalayan and sub-Himalayan rivers of India, the species is recorded from the upper stretches of the Ganga River. The characteristic feature is its small mouth, with thick lips. The species inhabit rivers and rapid streams with rocky bottom. The species travels toward headwaters at the start of the rainy season and downstream at the end of the rainy season. It is omnivorous and feeds on filamentous algae, water beetles and crustaceans. Over-exploitation and habitat loss are the major factors threatening the survival of the species.

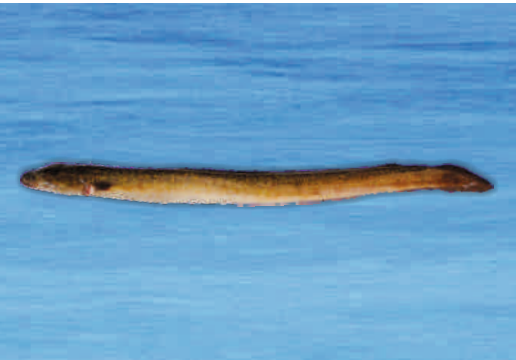


**Clown knife fish/  
Feather back**

(*Chitala chitala*)

IUCN: Near Threatened; CITES: Not listed; IWPA, 1972: Not listed

Distributed in the middle and lower stretches of the Ganga River, the species inhabits freshwater rivers, lakes, beels, reservoirs, canals and ponds. Maxilla (gape of mouth) extends beyond posterior edge of eye. Pelvic fin is rudimentary. Anal fin is very long, confluent, and with reduced caudal. Transverse silvery bars (about 15) are found on the back. 5 to 9 black rounded spots are found near the caudal region. Lateral line on the body is curved and complete. It feeds on aquatic insects, mollusks, shrimps and small fishes. Over-exploitation for food is the major threat to the species.



**Indian mottled eel**

(*Anguilla bengalensis*)

IUCN: Near Threatened; CITES: Not listed; IWPA: Not listed

Distributed in the middle and lower stretches of the Ganga River. Its body is elongated with robust conical head and is flattened dorsally. Tail is flattened. Mouth is terminal, with thick lips. Eyes of the species are very small. The species is semelparous and catadromous. It lives in freshwater streams, pools and reservoirs and commonly found in mud substrates of tanks and in deep rock pools of rivers, but also occurs in estuaries and in the sea during early life and near maturity. It feeds on insects and other aquatic invertebrates, fishes and crabs. Habitat degradation and overfishing are the major threats to the species.



**Wallago**

(*Wallago attu*)

IUCN Red List: Near Threatened; CITES: Not listed; IWPA, 1972: Not listed

Occurs all across India, and in most stretches of the Ganga River. It inhabits large rivers, tanks and lakes. It is among the largest, voracious and predatory of local catfish, which thrives well in rivers, lakes and ponds with grassy margin. Overexploitation of food and habitat destruction are the major threats and has resulted in population decline of this species.