

MULLETS

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Mullets or Gray mullets (Mugilidae, Mugiliformes, Actinopterygiiian teleosts) –are highly nutritious fish. They are good source of vitamin A and are also rich in protein contents. Mullets are commonly present in shallow inshore waters and estuaries of tropical and sub-tropical countries. Some species, e.g. *Trachstoma*, *Rhinomugil*, *Agnostoma* etc. have also been recorded at certain stages of their life cycle in fresh water also. They are both euryhaline and stenohaline.

Major areas sustaining mullet fishery in India are represented by both east and west coasts. They include estuaries of the rivers-Ganga, Godavari, Cauvery, Krishna, and Mahanadi and Chilka and Pulikat lakes along the east coast. Prominent areas supporting mullet fishery along the west coast are estuaries of Narmada, Tapti, Gulf of Kutch, and the back waters of Kerala notably the Vembaned lake, Kayamkulam lake and Asthamudi lake.

Mullets contribute a major portion in Indian brackish water fish landings. The estimated landing of mullets in India during 2018 was recorded as 5675 tonnes. 13 species of mullets have been reported from Indian waters (Luther, 1973), out of these 8 are commercially important (Table 1). Among these *Mugil cephalus* is most widely distributed.

Table 1. Commercially significant species of mullets.

Sl.No.	Species of mullets	Remarks
1.	<i>Mugil cephalus</i>	Successfully cultured along with <i>Tilapia spp.</i> In Israel & Taiwan
2.	<i>Mugil cunnesius</i>	-
3.	<i>Liza macrolepis</i> ,	Largescale mullet present in low salinity
4.	<i>Liza parsia</i>	A potential source of vitamin 'A'
5.	<i>Liza tade</i>	Rock mullet
6.	<i>Ellochelon vaigiensis</i>	Squaretail mullet
7.	<i>Valamugil seheli</i>	Bluespot mugil
8.	<i>Rhinomugil corsula</i>	Threatened mullet

Mullets exhibit a great degree of flexibility in feeding. They can feed upon a variety of food including planktons, benthic algae, decaying organic matter,

rice bran and ground nut cake etc. This flexibility of feeding, together with wide tolerance of temperature and salinity variations make mullets especially suitable for aquaculture (Oren, 1981). Several species of mullets have been found extremely suitable for polyculture. In India culture of mullets with other fishes and prawns has been successfully attempted.

Mullet farming is a prominent fishery activity in deltaic region of West Bengal and back waters of Kerala. They constitute an important source of food-fish as they remain available even during off season of other marine food fishes.