

Sport Fisheries of India

Recreational Fishing, also called Sport Fishing, is fishing for pleasure or recreation. It is the fastest growing segment in the tourism industry with an annual growth rate of 5% globally. Recreational fishing techniques include hand gathering, spearfishing, netting, angling and trapping. "**Angling**", fishing with rod, line and hooks, is one of the most common forms of recreational fishing. Another commonly practiced sport fishing is **Big Game Fishing** in which speed-boats are used to catch large open-water species such as Tuna, Sharks and Marlin. A less common technique is Bow-Fishing using a regular bow or a crossbow. The effective use of fishing techniques often depends on knowledge about the fish habit and habitat, their behaviour including foraging, migration, etc.

India has a long coastline, large number of rivers and streams, lakes, reservoirs etc. which offers vast opportunities for Sport Fishing and Angling. Fishing in India is possible throughout the year, but the best time for Sport Fishing is from October to November and mid-February to mid-May when the rivers and the streams are replete with all varieties of fish. Due to the different climatic conditions in diverse regions of India, best fishing season may however vary. October to November and April to June is the best season for Sport Fishing in the Himalayan Rivers while in South India it is April to September. The biggest advantage for Sport Fishing in India is that all the major river stretches are easily reachable from major towns and cities.

Some of the major rivers and their tributaries where Sport Fishing are common are River Mahanadi, Yamuna, Cauvery, Ganges, Brahmaputra, Sutlej and smaller rivers and streams of the Himalayas. A wide variety of fishes such as Mahseer, Trout and Carps are the commonly caught species in the inland waters. Streams feeding the Beas River in the Kullu Manali region are home to some of the biggest varieties of Trout. Indus and Lidder Rivers, their tributaries and a network of smaller rivers of Kashmir are famous for Sport Fishing of Trout and is often referred to as an "**Angler's Paradise**". Dodital Freshwater Lake nestled in the Uttarkashi Himalayas, Ramganga and the Sharda Rivers in the range of Jim Corbett National Park and rivers and streams of North-Eastern parts of India are known for Mahseers – "**King of Indian Sportfish**".

The **Golden Mahseer** or Himalayan Mahseer [*Tor putitora*, Hamilton, 1822] is a popular game fish and an angler's delight. It is acclaimed as a world famous, outstanding game and food fish of India. As a sport fish, Golden Mahseer provides unparalleled recreation to anglers from all over the world, better than salmon. It is known as the '**Tiger in Water**', because of the fight it musters to wriggle off the hook; maximum size recorded is 2.74 m and maximum weight recorded is 50 kg. The Dept. of Fisheries, Govt. of Himachal Pradesh, have established a Golden Mahseer Hatchery, succeeded in captive breeding and stocking/ranching to augment its population and promote Sport Fisheries.

River Beas waters in Kullu, Himachal Pradesh, were planted with **Brown Trout** (*Salmo trutta fario*) in 1909. A Trout Angling Association was formed in 1914 to propagate, conserve and promote Angling. Anglers were attracted in large numbers for nearly half a century. Trout hatcheries of Kullu became the hub for spreading it into different streams across length and breadth of Himalayas. Habitat in Tirthan and Jibhi streams are world famous for Wild Brown Trout. The Himachal Angling Association (HAA) at Palampur was formed in 1978 to conserve the migratory passage of Mahaseer and Trout.

The Trout Conservation and Angling Association (TCAA), constituted in Kullu Valley in the year 2010, has been continuously striving to improve the bio-diversity and environment of the valley streams on all fronts. The '**All India Open Catch-n-Release Trout Angling Championship**' is held annually during April in Kullu Valley, Himachal Pradesh. The total catch during three sessions in two days may be up to 90 Brown Trout which are duly released back into the streams after recording length, weight, etc. Those catching the largest size and the highest number of Trout are declared winners of the Championship.

An '**Aqua Tourism Centre**', has been established at Jasingfa in Nagaon district, Assam, to promote 'Recreational Fisheries and Eco-tourism in Northeast India'. Mahseer as an important sport fish is being propagated here. An Angling Festival is also organized during October where anglers from different Northeastern States participate.

Freshwater Game Fishes



Golden Mahseer or Himalayan Mahseer
Tor putitora



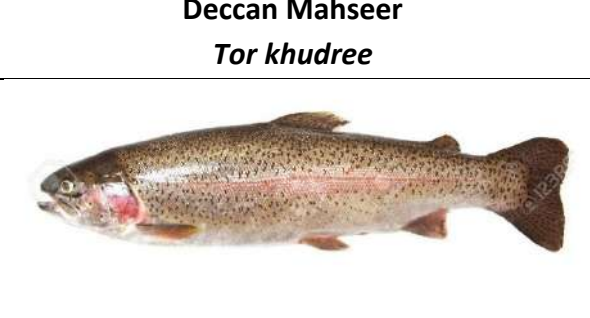
Chocolate Mahseer
Neolissochilus hexagonolepis



Deccan Mahseer
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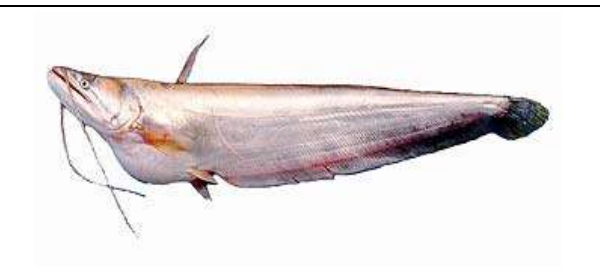
Rainbow Trout
Oncorhynchus mykiss



Brown Trout
Salmo trutta fario



Snow Trout
Schizothorax richardsonii



Freshwater Shark
Wallago attu

Sea Sport Fishing has not developed in India. But there is a good variety of game fish off the coasts of India like Baracuda, Mullet, Perch, Tuna, Marlin, Sail Fish and Seerfish. The Government allows “**Sea Game Fishing**” especially along Andaman Islands since 1993. Andaman & Nicobar Islands are often referred to as “**the best game fish destination**” in the world. Besides, there are few principal coasts where open Sea Game Fishing setup exists in some form, e.g., Odisha, Lakshadweep Island, Goa and Kerala coasts. Chilka Lake in Odisha

offers fishing for Tuna, Prawn, etc., while waters of Lakshadweep and Andamans are known for Tuna, Blue Marlin, Barracuda and Grouper resources.

Marine Game Fishes



Tarpon or Oxeye Herring
Megalops cyprinoides



Greasy Grouper
Epinephelus tauvina



King Seer
Scomberomorus commerson



Yellowfin Tuna
Thunnus albacares



Red Snapper
Lutjanus argentimaculatus



Croaker
Protonibea diacanthus



Blue Marlin
Makaira nigricans



Barracuda
Sphyraena sp.
