

## Background

The Northeastern region of India (Lat. 21°57' – 29°30' N; Long. 89°46' – 97°30' E) comprises the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. It covers an area of 262,179 km<sup>2</sup>, accounting 8% of the India's geographical area. Agricultural activities including fisheries play a pivotal role in the socio-economic development of the region. The eco-climatic zones of freshwater fisheries in the region vary from warm waters in the plains of Assam and Tripura to upland coldwaters of AP and Sikkim. The Brahmaputra and Barak are the principal rivers of Northeast India, which along with their numerous tributaries criss-cross the region. These rivers with their associated wetlands form the mainstay of natural fisheries in the region.



The region has 5.63 lakh ha inland waterbodies which include 20875 km rivers, 0.33 lakh ha reservoirs, 3.71 lakh ha tanks & ponds, 1.59 lakh ha floodplain lakes & derelict waterbodies and 0.028 lakh ha rice-cum-fish culture area. The region reportedly houses 63.3% of total 667 freshwater fish species reported from India. So far, 422 fish species belonging to 133 genera and 38 families have been reported from the region. The Eastern Himalayan region is identified as a

freshwater biodiversity hot-spot. The total fish production of the NE region was estimated at 4,23,749 metric ton (mt) during 2015-16 (Assam: 2,97,000 mt, Tripura: 68,331 mt, Manipur: 32,000 mt, Nagaland: 8,220 mt, Mizoram: 6,828 mt, Meghalaya: 6,560 mt, Arunachal Pradesh: 4,410 mt and Sikkim: 400 mt), which was 4% of the country's total fish production and met 86% fish requirement of the region (present requirement is estimated at 4,82,384 mt). More than 95% of the region's population is fish eaters and the demand for fish is more than the supply. In order to fill the production-demand gap, a large quantity of fish is procured from different states of the country like Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal etc. Concerted efforts for fisheries and aquaculture development in the region are crucial to bridge the gap.

With vast and varied aquatic resources, the region has tremendous potential for enhancement of fish production from inland open waters. The people of NE India are generally agrarian and livelihood of fishers depends on the open water fisheries resources. Application of scientific fisheries management is not up to the mark in the region. In recent years, reduction in abundance of natural/ captive freshwater fisheries due to destruction of habitats, destructive fishing methods and other human interferences have been observed. Overexploitation of fishes including juvenile and brood fish is a major factor responsible for depletion of natural fish stocks.

For optimal utilization and sustainable development of the fisheries resources of the region, resource-use planning based on scientific database, optimal exploitation of waterbodies, fishing and post harvest technologies and infrastructure, strategic plans

(including HRD) and policies are essential. Ornamental and sports fisheries (including aqua-tourism) are the other avenues which can be developed. Such economic activities will earn additional income for fishers.



Against this background, the ICAR-CIFRI is organizing a Regional Consultation on "Open water fisheries development in NE region" at Guwahati on 29.04.17 involving the State fisheries departments/ corporations, research institutes, development agencies and other stakeholders of the region. The consultation is expected to help in formulating an effective roadmap for fisheries development in NE region.





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## Regional Consultation



on

**“Open water fisheries development in NE region”**

**April 29, 2017**

Organized by

**ICAR-Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute**

**Barrackpore, Kolkata – 700 120**

Venue

**NIRD & PR, NERC, Guwahati**

