

4. Marine Fisheries Census 2025 – Environment

Marine Fisheries Census 2025 Goes Fully Digital; VYAS Apps to Enable Real-Time, Geo-Referenced Data Collection. India has launched the Marine Fisheries Census (MFC) 2025, its fifth and first-ever fully digital census, to gather socio-economic data from 1.2 million fisher households. Managed by ICAR-CMFRI and funded by PMMSY, it uses the "VYAS" app and drone technology to support data-driven policy for the blue economy.

Official Launch of Marine Fisheries Census (MFC) 2025

Inauguration – The Marine Fisheries Census (MFC) 2025 was officially launched by the Union Minister of State for Fisheries.

Date – The launch event took place on 31 October 2025.

Venue – The launch was held at the ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), located in Kochi, Kerala.

About the Marine Fisheries Census (MFC) 2025

Edition and Frequency – The MFC 2025 is the fifth edition of this national census. It is conducted consistently every 5 years, a practice that has been followed since 2005.

2025 Slogan – The official slogan for this census is – “Smart Census, Smarter Fisheries”.

Comprehensive Coverage – The census aims to survey –

1. Approximately 1.2 million fisher households.
2. Across 4,000–5,000 marine fishing villages.
3. Spanning all 13 coastal States and Union Territories, which explicitly includes the Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep.

Governance and Funding

Coordinating Ministry – Department of Fisheries (DoF), under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.

Nodal Agency – The ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) in Kochi, Kerala, is the primary agency responsible for the census.

Operational Partner – The Fishery Survey of India (FSI) will partner in the operational execution.

Funding Source – The census is fully funded by the central government under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY).

Unique Features of MFC 2025 – A Digital Transformation

Fully Digital Census – This is the first-ever fully digital Marine Census, marking a significant technological leap.

Real-time Data Flow – The digital infrastructure allows for a real-time data flow directly from the field enumerators to the central servers, ensuring immediate data availability and validation.

Advanced Technology Suite –

Drone Technology – Drones will be utilized for the aerial validation and neutral verification of fishing crafts, adding a layer of accuracy.

Geo-tagging – All collected data will be geo-tagged to ensure spatial accuracy.

Live Monitoring – The system includes live monitoring dashboards to enhance transparency and allow for real-time tracking of the census progress.

VYAS Mobile Application Suite – The entire census operation is powered by the VYAS mobile application suite, which was developed in-house by CMFRI. This suite consists of three components –

VYAS-NAV – Used for the validation of fishing villages and fishing harbours.

VYAS-BHARAT – The primary application used by enumerators for collecting household and infrastructure data.

VYAS-SUTRA – An application designed for real-time supervision, verification, and monitoring by officials.

Comprehensive Data Collection – The census will capture a wide array of socio-economic, infrastructural, and institutional data, including –

Household Economics – Detailed information on household income, asset ownership, liabilities, sources of credit, and insurance coverage.

Impact Assessment – Specific data to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the fishing communities.

Scheme Coverage – Mapping the penetration and coverage of key government welfare schemes like PMMSY and PM-MKSSY (Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana).

Institutional Mapping – Identifying and documenting all Fish Farmer Producer Organisations (FFPOs) and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) active in the coastal regions.

National Fisheries Development Portal (NFDP)

Purpose – A National Fisheries Development Portal (NFDP) has been established to link fishers with government benefits.

Mandatory Registration – Fishers must register on the NFDP to be eligible for accessing benefits provided under government schemes, specifically the PM-MKSSY.

Access Point – This registration process for fishers is being facilitated nationwide through the network of Common Service Centres (CSCs).

Significance of the MFC 2025

Data Quality – The digital-first approach ensures accurate, transparent, and efficient data collection and subsequent analysis.

Evidence-Based Foundation – The census will provide a robust, evidence-based foundation for critical government functions, including –

Policy and Welfare – Better policy planning and more effective targeting of welfare schemes.

Development – Guiding infrastructure and livelihood development tailored to the specific needs of coastal regions.

Resilience and Growth – Promoting climate-resilient practices and ensuring the inclusive growth of marine communities.

Conclusion – The Future of Fisheries Governance

Transformative Step – The Marine Fisheries Census 2025 represents a transformative step forward for the sector.

Data-Driven Governance – It signals a shift toward digital, data-driven, and inclusive fisheries governance.

Strengthening the Blue Economy – This initiative strengthens India's broader efforts to achieve sustainable and climate-resilient growth within its blue economy.

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