

Polavatta fish

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In news- Adding one more fish to India's marine biodiversity, the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) has identified a new carangid (Vatta) species from the Indian coast recently.

About Polavatta fish-

- It belongs to the 'queen fish' group and is named ***Scomberoides pelagicus***.
- **In local parlance, the fish is known as polavatta.**
- It is distinct by the deep ovate body, concave dorsal head profile, and stout and less numerous gill rakers on the first-gill arch compared to the closely related species.
- There are more than 60 species of carangids in Indian seas, out of which four belong to the 'queen fish'.
- **The newly described one is the fifth queenfish from Indian waters.**
- All over the world, three queen fishes were extinct earlier.
- The new fish is available across coasts in the country including Kerala and is highly relished and has good demand in domestic markets.

About queen fish-

- The queenfish (*Seriphus politus*) is a species of fish in the family Sciaenidae, the drums and croakers.
- It is **native to the eastern Pacific Ocean.**
- It is also known commonly as the queen croaker.
- This is the only species in the monotypic genus *Seriphus*.
- This species is up to 30 centimeters long. It has an elongated, compressed body.
- It feeds on marine invertebrates and small fish.

- It is blue-grey to tan in colour with a shiny silver belly and a dark horizontal line running the length of the body.
- The pectoral fin is dark and the other fins are yellowish.
- The mouth contains one or two rows of pointed teeth.
- It occurs in coastal waters, such as bays and sloughs, moving to deeper waters at night.

The Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI)-

- It was established by the Government of India in 1947 under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and later it joined the ICAR family in 1967.
- One of the major achievements of CMFRI is the development and refinement of a unique method for estimation of fishery catch and effort from the over 8000 km coastline called the "Stratified Multistage Random Sampling Method".
- With this methodology the Institute maintains the National Marine Fisheries Data Centre (NMFDC) with over 9 million catch and effort data records from all maritime states of India of more than 1000 fished species.