

New Species Discovery Puts Lakshadweep's Blue-Green Chromis in the Global Spotlight: ICAR-NBFGR

Kochi, 08.09.2026

The familiar blue-green Chromis, long traded worldwide as *Chromis viridis*, has turned out to be two distinct species. Scientists from ICAR-National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources have discovered and described a new species, *Chromis veneta* sp. nov., from Indian Ocean. The discovery emerged from marine biodiversity conservation research in Lakshadweep, where blue-green damselfishes have traditionally been used as live bait for yellowfin tuna fishing. As part of efforts to develop sustainable alternatives, ICAR-NBFGR scientists initiated captive-breeding research and succeeded with experimental successes and the findings published in international journal, *Aquaculture* in 2024. Continuing this work, researchers combined genetic and morphological analyses and found that, Lakshadweep blue-green chromis comprises two species. Although *C. veneta* closely resembles *C. viridis* in its blue-green colour, however, differs in body shape, pigmentation, fin margins, caudal-fin structure, dentition, gill-raker counts and sagittal otolith morphology. The interesting finding is *C. veneta* is not restricted to India, it has also been distributed in Indonesia, Madagascar, Fiji and Lizard Island in Australia's Great Barrier Reef, suggesting a potentially much wider distribution yet to be documented. Based on our study, in India, it is confirmed from Lakshadweep and Gulf of Mannar, and the findings appeared in one of leading international journals, *Frontiers in Marine Science*. The discovery has important implications for the global marine ornamental fish trade, as *C. veneta* may have been collected and sold for decades under the name *C. viridis*. It also highlights the importance of accurate species identification for sustainable aquarium trade, captive breeding and reef-fish conservation. According to Dr. Kajal Chakraborty, Director, ICAR-NBFGR, a fish once considered a single species has now revealed a hidden chapter of reef biodiversity, potentially redefining how one of the world's most popular damselfishes is identified and traded.

