

## Ranching of conservation-prioritised catfishes in Kerala's Chalakudy River by ICAR-NBFGR

In a significant stride towards the conservation of endangered aquatic species, the Centre for Peninsular Aquatic Genetic Resources (PAGR), ICAR-National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources (NBFGR), with the support of the Kerala Forest & Wildlife Department, WWF-India, and Kerala Fisheries Department, has embarked on a mission to ranch and protect the rare catfish species, 'Endangered' *Horabagrus nigricollaris* and 'Vulnerable' *Horabagrus brachysoma*, in the pristine waters of Chalakudy River, under the CRP-Agrobiodiversity Project. Ranching was carried out on 05.09.2023 with the release of captive-bred 1500 advanced fingerlings of *H. nigricollaris* and 15000 fingerlings of *H. brachysoma*, under the guidance of Dr. UK Sarkar, Director, ICAR-NBFGR, at the scenic Chalakudy River in Vettilappara, marking a significant milestone in the ongoing efforts to safeguard India's diverse aquatic biodiversity. Dr. Sarkar emphasized on the importance of collaborations that bridge the gap between scientific research and on-ground conservation efforts. Ranching was inaugurated by Shri. TJSK Joseph, MLA of Chalakudy, in the presence of Dr. UK Sarkar, Director, ICAR-NBFGR, Dr. TT Ajith Kumar, Head, PAGR; Dr. VS Basheer, Principal Scientist, PAGR; Mrs. Lakshmi, IFS, DFO, Vazhachal Division; Mrs. Athira, President, Athirampilly Panchayat; and Mrs. Jibina, FEO, Fisheries Department, Kerala.

