

NATURAL RESOURCES SYSTEMS PROGRAMME
PROJECT REPORT¹

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Buying fish seed. STREAM Better Practice Guidelines.
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Buying Fish Seed

If you haven't been growing fish for very long, there may be many things that you need to know about buying fish seed...



Some important things to remember about buying fish seed

Most farmers who grow fish in seasonal / Perennial ponds grow three types of Indian Major Carp: *catla*, *rohu* and *mrigal*. These fish have different and complementary feeding habits. Growing these three fish together maximizes use of the pond as the three species live and grow harmoniously together.

Thus, it is important to stock all the three varieties of fish seed in your pond so that the available food in the pond can be utilized properly. As *catla* usually stay at the surface of the pond and consume the available food on the surface. *rohu* usually stay in the column of the pond and use the available food and *mrigal* stay at the bottom of the pond and consume the food available at the bottom.



Farmers usually like to have equal numbers of each of these fish in the pond. However, when buying fish seed to stock ponds it is often difficult to tell whether all three types of fish are equally represented because it is difficult to distinguish between them. There is a strong chance that *catla*, which is the most prized fish, is underrepresented because of lack of availability of its broodstock coupled with the fact that it is difficult to spawn.

Some ways of identifying the seeds of Indian Major Carp



Identifying *catla* seed

If you put the *catla* seed in a bowl of water and listen carefully, then a sound like *chick – chick* will be heard. *Catla* usually swim at the surface of the water.

Identifying *rohu* seed

If you put the seed in the bowl of water, they will swim in the column of the bowl and they appear dark in color with a narrow head.

Identifying *mrigal* seed

If you put the seed in a bowl of water, they will be usually found to swim at the bottom of the water.



Ras Behari Beraik is an expert fish grower. He has many years of experience buying fish seed. He knows that when people buy a mix of *rohu*, *mrigal* and *catla* seed for their pond, most people don't know how to tell whether there is enough *catla* seed in the mix.

How can you tell if there is *catla* seed?

Well, lift the bowl to your ear and listen. A sound like “*Chick Chick*” will indicate that *Chick catla* is there.



Some precautions you need to take while buying fish seeds

Some tips for identifying healthy, good quality fish seed



The fry is **healthy** if:

- the body of the fry is uniform and greenish in color
- the gills of the juvenile appear bright red

Some tips for identifying diseased fish seeds

The fry is **unhealthy** if:

- red spots can be seen in the gills
- the head appear to be bigger than the body
- red spots or blisters appear in the entire body of the juvenile



That makes things a lot easier to understand. To buy good quality seed we need to:

1: Select the three main types which use different parts of the pond

2: Then we have to identify the types of carp using the tests shown, we can even listen to them and here them sing "Chick Chick"..This means its Catla...



4: These simple tests can help us avoid stocking the wrong and unhealthy fish. That's great, when can we start and where can we find out more?

3: Don't forget we need to identify whether they are healthy as we don't want them to die. We can test their health by checking their gills are red and body is green.

Useful Contacts

Other Better-Practice Guidelines

There are more Better-Practice Guidelines in this series. These include:

- Information Access Surveys
- Self-Help Groups
- Consensus Building Process
- One Stop Aqua Shop

You can get more copies of this and other Better-Practice Guidelines from your STREAM Country Office, from the STREAM Regional Office or from the STREAM Website.

We would like your feedback about these Better-Practice Guidelines. You can let us know by phoning, emailing or writing to the Communications Hub Manager at your STREAM Country Office.

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