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Poisoned Rivers

2026: Documentation of Mass Fish Death Incidents in Indian Rivers

SANDRP

This is summary report and detailed documentation of available media reports on mass fish mortality incidents in Indian rivers between 17 Nov. 2025 and 23 Nov. 2026.

Based on analysis of available media reports, we could document at least 45 incidents of mass fish mortality in Indian rivers during past one year. The incidents were spread across almost all major and smaller river basins and different regions of the country. They affected every part of river systems, including headwaters, tributaries, main river channels, creeks and estuaries. The scale and frequency of these events clearly indicates towards growing threats to freshwater ecosystems and the riverine communities that depend on them.

The basin wise distribution shows that 60% of the incidents have occurred in four river basins. The Ganga basin witnessed the highest number of incidents (9-all in Yamuna basin), followed by the Brahmaputra (7), Krishna (6) & Indus (5). The Godavari basin and the West Flowing Rivers of the Netravati-Gurupura system recorded three incidents each. The Narmada and Mahanadi basins recorded two each. One incident each was reported in the Subarnarekha, Kosasthalaiyar, Cauvery, Ulhas, Sabarmati, Palar, Pennar rivers and Periyar basin.

Within the Ganga basin, the five incidents occurred in the Yamuna itself, while one each was reported in the Sahibi, Gambhiri, Chambal and Betwa rivers highlighting the recurring threat to fish species across the Yamuna and its tributaries. Several other rivers also witnessed repeated incidents during the year. The Indrayani in Pune reported mass fish deaths near Alandi in June, Sept. and Oct. 2026. Similarly, the Phalguni in Mangaluru witnessed at least three incidents in Feb., May and June 2026. These repeated events raise concerns about persistent pollution and the failure to address its underlying sources.

The regional spread shows that North and South India recorded the highest number of incidents, with 12 each. West India followed with 8, Northeast India with 7, Central India with 4 and East India with 3 incidents. Kashmir, Delhi, Maharashtra and Karnataka states witnessed repeated fish mortality events.

The month-wise distribution shows that June recorded the highest number of incidents (9), followed by April and July (7 each), Oct. and Nov. (6 each) and May (3). The month of Feb. March, Aug. and Sept. also recorded two incidents each suggesting that the mass fish mortality was not restricted to a particular season or type of river condition.

Factor wise, the industrial effluents and chemical pollution was suspected as the main reason behind about 20 such incidents. Sewage and domestic wastewater were reported as possible contributing factors in around 10 cases. These causes are just indicators as some incidents involved both industrial and sewage pollution. However, the situation clearly suggests the continuing failure to prevent untreated industrial and municipal waste from entering the affected rivers.

The lack of flows due to inadequate releases from dams, falling water levels and physical obstructions in rivers also appeared to have contributed to fish mortality in some of the cases. The incidents in the Tungabhadra and Cauvery rivers particularly highlighted the ecological consequences of insufficient water availability.

The incidents have occurred in both urban rivers and rural areas. In rural areas, untreated industrial effluents and chemical discharges were among the major suspected causes. In urban stretches, fish deaths were often associated with a combination of industrial pollution, untreated sewage and wastewater. However, the precise causes remain unconfirmed in several cases. Oxygen depletion was also reported as reason in many incidents but it is a result of polluted or stagnant water and not the actual cause behind these incidents.

In several urban and rural locations, mass fish deaths raised concerns about the safety of water used by local communities. In Delhi, the fish mortality incidents in the Yamuna were particularly serious because the river supplies raw water to the city’s treatment plants. In Jamshedpur, the mass fish deaths in the Subarnarekha raised public-health concerns, as the

Subarnarekha and Kharkai rivers are described as lifelines for around 15 lakh people. In Mangaluru, following repeated fish deaths in the Phalguni river, residents began getting well water tested.

In Kashmir, fish deaths in the springs caused particular alarm because the springs are the main drinking-water source for nearly all households in many villages. The fish death in Manipur's Sengmai river also raised similar concerns. These cases show that fish mortality risks can go beyond aquatic ecosystems to water quality and public health. They also expose the vulnerability of riverine communities that depend directly on rivers and local water bodies for their daily needs.

The species found among the dead fish raise further concerns. Tilapia, an invasive fish species in many Indian freshwater systems, was reported among the carcasses in some incidents. Their presence underlines the need for proper species identification and monitoring. It also raises questions about the spread of invasive species and their possible impacts on native freshwater biodiversity.

Public protests and judicial interventions: Several incidents triggered public protests, complaints to pollution control authorities and judicial interventions. These responses reflect growing public frustration over repeated fish deaths and the failure to prevent pollution.

In Ennore Creek, Tamil Nadu, fisherfolk and environmental groups protested after the Aug. 2026 mass fish deaths. They demanded compensation, accountability and implementation of the NGT's July 2022 order. The state government then announced a four-member expert committee to investigate the incident. However, by Oct. 2026, the fishermen from eight hamlets were still planning to block suspected sewage entry points themselves alleging that authorities had failed to take effective action.

In Jharkhand, the NGT took cognizance of fish deaths and pollution in the Subarnarekha river in May 2026 and directed a three-member joint committee to submit a fact-finding report. In Chhattisgarh, the High Court took suo motu cognizance in May 2026 of severe industrial pollution in the Shivnath and Kharun rivers following reports of mass fish deaths and alleged discharge of untreated industrial effluents. The court also sought explanations from the concerned authorities and directed the preparation of an action plan to address industrial pollution.

In Punjab, farmers and environmentalists raised concerns over toxic pollution and fish deaths in Sutlej near Harike in April 2026. They demanded water-quality testing, an investigation and accountability and also approached the NGT, urging it to take cognizance of the incident. The Phalguni river in Mangaluru has also seen repeated complaints and demands for action. The NGT's Chennai Bench had earlier taken suo motu cognizance of pollution in the river. However, local groups alleged that only some formal measures had followed and continued to demand a comprehensive inquiry and action against polluting industries.

The situation in the Periyar river, Kerala highlighted the ongoing struggle of affected communities for compensation. Two years after the mass fish kill of May 2024 along the Eloor–Edayar industrial stretch, fisherfolk were still awaiting relief. These cases underline that public protests, committee formation and judicial directions have not always translated into timely investigations, effective action or relief for affected communities. They also show the need for accountability and effective pollution control rather than temporary responses after mass fish deaths.

Persistent gaps in investigation and pollution control: In most incidents, the actual causes of fish mortality remained unidentified or have not been conclusively established. Delays in inspections, water and fish sampling, laboratory testing and public disclosure have weakened efforts to determine the causes and fix responsibility.

The repeated incidents raise serious questions about the effectiveness of existing pollution control measures and the functioning of State Pollution Control Boards and the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). Despite regulatory frameworks, monitoring mechanisms and several action plans, untreated industrial and municipal wastewater continues to enter rivers. The recurrence of fish deaths reveals the inadequate enforcement and preventive actions by the concerned agencies.

Unless authorities move beyond post-incident inspections and take sustained action against pollution at its source, these events are likely to recur in bigger number and scale. Under this business as usual scenario, India's poisoned rivers will continue to become graveyards for precious freshwater biodiversity. Preventing this requires urgent action to protect aquatic life, restore river health and safeguard the communities that depend on these rivers.

INDUS BASIN

Jhelum; Feb. 2026: **J&K: Neglect, pollution push Sherbagh springs into ecological crisis** Fish deaths at the historic Nagbal springs in Sherbagh garden have been attributed to fungal and bacterial infections triggered by highly contaminated and oxygen-depleted water, fisheries officials said. Indigenous cold-water fish (Schizothorax species) have been dying since Feb. 15 across two spring-fed ponds and their water channels at Sherbagh garden, raising concerns among locals and prompting an inspection by the Fisheries Department.

“The mass fish death is due to fungal infestation and bacterial infection,” Assistant Director of Fisheries Anantnag Shabir Ahmad told Greater Kashmir, adding that dissolved oxygen levels are very low and carbon dioxide levels are high. “The mortality cannot be attributed to a single factor.” It is a multifactorial problem, primarily driven by oxygen stress, low dissolved oxygen and excessive nutrient buildup, which weakened the livestock and made them vulnerable to infections,” Ahmad said.

June 2026: **Rising Pollution Is Killing Fish in Springs** A few months ago, an incident of fish death took place in the spring of the historically and religiously important Martand Sun Temple in Mattan area of Anantnag. Similar incidents were reported at Sher Bagh spring of Anantnag besides various water bodies in Kulgam, Shopian and Ganderbal. The recent large-scale fish mortality in the famous Panzath Nag spring of Qazigund has once again raised concerns among experts and the local population.

During the investigation, it was also found that domestic sewage from nearby communities is being released directly into the springs. Apart from this, plastic, polythene, food waste and other garbage are also being thrown into the water, while at some places people were also found engaged in activities like washing clothes in the springs. Experts said that all these factors have adversely affected the quality of the water, as a result of which the fish are becoming easy prey to diseases.

July 2026: **Mass Fish Deaths Reported in Panzath Spring** A large number of fish have been found dead under unexplained circumstances at the Kulam Chinar Spring in the Dooru area of south Kashmir’s Anantnag district, days after a similar incident was reported at Panzath Nag in Qazigund, prompting concern among local residents. According to residents, the spring, known for its clear water, is the main source of drinking water for nearly 3,000 households in the villages of Shankerpora, Chakpath and Kulam Chinar.

The incident comes amid a series of fish mortality events reported across Kashmir’s freshwater springs, streams and lakes. Major incidents at the Brengi stream, Panzath Nag spring, Sherbagh spring and Wular Lake have resulted in the death of thousands of fish. According to investigations by the Fisheries Department, the fish deaths have primarily been linked to severe oxygen depletion, contamination from untreated domestic sewage, detergent runoff and the increasing accumulation of solid waste in and around water bodies.

June 2026: **Himachal Pradesh: Sewage leak suspected behind mass fish death** The Himachal Pradesh State Pollution Control Board (HPSPCB) issued a show-cause notice to the General Manager of the District Industries Centre (DIC), Mandi, following allegations of severe pollution and large-scale fish mortality in the Ratti water stream in Balh subdivision. The action comes after a complaint lodged by a local resident of Ratti, alleging heavy accumulation of slurry and mass fish deaths in the stream near the local police station.

During the inspection, villagers informed the team that fish mortality had occurred two to three days earlier and dead fish had been seen floating near Ratti Bridge. Officials subsequently inspected the nearby industrial area to trace the source of contamination. The inspection revealed that a sewage collection chamber connected to a septic tank was overflowing. The pipeline linking the chamber to the septic tank was found damaged, resulting in the discharge of untreated sewage directly into the Ratti water stream. Stagnant sewage water was also observed at several points in the stream.

Sutlej; April 2026: **Punjab: Toxic dumping triggers fish deaths** Farmer organisations and environmentalists have accused municipal bodies and industrial units of dumping toxic elements into water bodies, leading to the death of a large number of fish in the Sutlej near Harike Pattan, the confluence of the Sutlej and Beas. While farmer forum Azad Kisan Morcha has threatened protests if corrective measures are not taken, Col C M Lakhanpal (retd), a member of the PAC for Mattewara Jungles, Sutlej, and Buddha Dariya, has written to Punjab chief minister Bhagwant Mann and governor Gulab Chand Kataria seeking their urgent intervention.

More dead fish found near Harike Three days after a large number of fish was found dead on the banks of the Satluj near the Harike headworks, activists from pro-environment organization Water Warriors and farmers discovered more carcasses floating on both sides of the river in Gatta Badshah village in Bathinda district on April 05 morning. Residents and activists demanded immediate testing of water samples, removal of the dead fish to mitigate health hazards, and strict accountability to prevent future occurrences.

Environmentalist and Lt Col (retired) Jasjit Singh Gill filed complain to the NGT to take cognisance of the sudden death of fish near the confluence of the Sutlej and Beas rivers at Harike in Punjab. A large number of fish have died, and it needs to be looked into the reasons behind whether it is due to some toxic element or some chemical pushed into the water bodies.

Fish deaths linked to pollution, bacterial infection: Report The report, released by pro-environment group Water Warriors Punjab, found elevated biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) and high ammonia levels in river water, indicators of severe pollution, where the fish were found dead. The incident adds to recurring fish deaths reported in the Harike region, with activists repeatedly blaming polluted discharges, including from tributaries such as Buddha Dariya in Ludhiana.

BRAHMAPUTRA BASIN

Assam; June 2026: **Mass fish deaths in Kharkhari river** Thousands of fish have been found dead in the Kharkhari River in Assam's Boko area, raising concerns over possible industrial pollution and its impact on local livelihoods and aquatic biodiversity. The incident was reported along a stretch of the river from Shola to Trilochan, where residents observed large numbers of dead fish floating in the water and scattered along the riverbanks. Species reportedly affected include Puthi, Khalihna, Dorikona and Borali, all of which are commonly found in the river ecosystem.

Local residents have alleged that untreated industrial effluents discharged from the Chaygaon Industrial Centre may have contaminated the river water. Community members have specifically raised concerns about the operations of Brahmaputra Biochem Pvt. Ltd., alleging that wastewater released from the facility has entered the river without adequate treatment. Residents stated that similar incidents have been reported on multiple occasions in recent

years. They claim that despite repeated complaints and concerns raised before the authorities, effective corrective measures and monitoring mechanisms have not been implemented.

Teesta River; Dec. 2025: W Bengal: Large numbers of dead fish float in Teesta Large numbers of fish were found dead in the Teesta, with preliminary indications that poisoning of the river water had killed the aquatic species. Since February, this is the second time that fish have been found dead and floating in the river. Residents spotted huge quantities of dead fish floating near Mirichbari in the Mainaguri block of the district on Dec. 09, morning. Mirichbari is close to Domohani, around 10km from Jalpaiguri town. Piscean species such as rohu, boroli (Barna baril), aar (long-whiskered catfish), punti (pool barb), foli (Asiatic knifefish), and shol (snakehead murrel) were found dead. Officials from the fisheries department visited the spot.

Earlier this year, stagnant water in a section of the river had been contaminated with toxic chemicals, leading to the deaths of large numbers of fish near Saradapally in Jalpaiguri. Earlier, in November and December, 2011 again during the same months in 2015, large-scale fish deaths were reported in the basin of the Karala river, which flows through Jalpaiguri, because of the use of endosulfan, a harmful pesticide. The river water had to be flushed with fresh water from the Teesta irrigation project to dilute the toxins. On December 18, 2012, fish were killed in the Karala river after toxic oil was poured into the water. On October 16, 2020, toxic chemicals were dumped in the Teesta near Saradapally in Jubilee Park here, leading to another major fish kill. On December 1, 2023, and on February 4, 2025, fish mortality due to poisoning was reported again in the Teesta near Saradapally.

April 2026: Mass fish death in Teesta near Jalpaiguri Hundreds of fish floated dead on the Teesta river near Jalpaiguri town on April 29, 2026 raising concerns that anti-social elements had poisoned the water. Residents of South Sukantanagar noticed the dead fish while heading to the riverbank with their cattle on Tuesday. They claimed that nearly 10 varieties of fish were found floating lifeless in the water. Many residents suspect that the deaths were caused by deliberate poisoning of the river. In February, a large-scale fish death was reported along a stretch of nearly 1.5km of the Karala, which flows through Jalpaiguri town.

Meghalaya; Oct. 2026: Dead fish found in Apha river Residents of Umkiang village in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills district have raised concerns over possible river pollution after discovering large numbers of dead fish floating in the Apha River. Empty containers suspected to have held poisonous chemicals were also found along the riverbank, prompting concerns among villagers about the possible contamination of the waterway. However, the cause of the fish deaths has not been officially established.

Residents said similar incidents had reportedly occurred for three consecutive years, but those responsible had yet to be identified. Expressing concern over the recurring deaths of fish, villagers urged the authorities, particularly the District Council, to investigate the matter, determine the cause and take appropriate action against those found responsible. Villagers called for urgent intervention to prevent further damage to the river ecosystem and safeguard the livelihoods of people who depend on fishing. They stressed the need for a thorough investigation and effective measures to identify the source of the suspected contamination and prevent similar incidents in the future.

Nagaland; Nov. 2025: Fish found dead in Chathe river Authorities are investigating a suspected case of river poisoning in the Chathe River under Chümoukedima district after discoloured water and large numbers of dead fish were found on Nov. 17, 2025 morning. Sources said that the water turned dark following the release of an unknown substance, resulting in the death of fish and other aquatic organisms. They said that the intensity of the contamination caused the immediate decay of the dead creatures. The incident is suspected to have occurred between Jharnapani and New Medziphema.

Authorities are examining whether the discharge was chemical or waste oil from a mechanical plant. A water sample has been sent for laboratory testing. No arrests have been made. Public

leaders who spoke to Eastern Mirror described the act as an affront to society, warning that such contamination threatens both aquatic life and human health. They urged residents downstream to immediately stop using water from the river until it is declared safe and appealed for the advisory to be widely shared among communities along the riverbank.

Tripura; June 2026: **Thousands of fish die in Monu river canal** Thousands of fish, including small and large fish and fish fry, were found dead in the Kata Gang canal following suspected deliberate poisoning by unidentified persons. The affected canal stretches from near Tilla Bazar School towards the Monu River. Local residents alleged that poison had been mixed into the water, although the cause has not been officially confirmed. The canal is used by nearby communities for bathing and as a water source for cattle, buffaloes and ducks. Fearing contamination, villagers have restricted livestock access to the water. Residents have demanded an immediate investigation, water-quality testing and strict action against those responsible. The report states that the community was awaiting administrative action.

July 2026: **Mass fish deaths reported in Khowai stream** A large number of dead fish were found floating in a stream and adjoining waterbody in Khowai town. The stream originates from Jambura Haor, passes through Ganaki, Subhash Park and District Hospital Chowmuhani, and eventually joins the Khowai River. Residents suspect deteriorating water quality and pollution as possible causes, but the exact reason remains unknown. They have demanded an investigation, scientific testing of water and fish samples, and stricter monitoring of fish sold in local markets. The report does not mention any investigation findings or official action so far.

Manipur River Basin; Oct. 2025: **Mass fish deaths in Sengmai river** Residents of Kakching district have raised serious concerns after a large number of dead fish were found floating in the Sengmai River, reportedly due to the release of chemical or toxic substances into the water. The incident has triggered alarm among local communities, as the river serves as a key water source for households in Kakching, Wabagai, Keirak, and Langmeidong areas. Locals suspect that some unknown individuals may have discharged industrial or animal waste upstream, leading to the sudden death of fish and other aquatic life.

Residents have pointed out that this is not the first time such an incident has occurred. Similar fish deaths and pollution episodes were reported in previous years, particularly during the post-harvest season, when waste from pig farms and slaughterhouses often drains into the river. The Sengmai River is linked to several water supply projects connected to the Sekmai Barrage, making its contamination a matter of significant concern for thousands of residents who depend on it for daily needs.

GANGA BASIN

Yamuna; April 2026: **Delhi: Dead fish in Najafgarh raises effluent concern again** Thousands of dead fish have been floating along the Najafgarh drain, Delhi's most-polluted stormwater drain that empties into the Yamuna, near southwest Delhi's Rawta village over at least the past five days, with villagers alleging the water colour—usually, a dark shade of grey—has been darker and murkier. The incident has been logged near the Dhansa regulator, locals said. The issue is also not limited to the Najafgarh drain. In May 2025 and prior to that, in July 2024, hundreds of dead fish were recorded along the Yamuna banks near Burari in north Delhi.

May 2026: **Haryana: Industrial pollution turns Yamuna black** This ground report has highlighted severe pollution in the Yamuna river near Panipat, where untreated industrial effluents are reportedly turning the river water black and causing large-scale fish deaths. According to the report, nearly 390 industrial units discharge wastewater into Drain No. 2, which eventually flows into the Yamuna. The polluted water reportedly travels around 56 km before entering the river near Palla village. Locals allege that toxic chemicals, foul smell, and black-coloured water have made the river highly polluted.

July 2026: **Uttar Pradesh: Mass fish death reported in Yamuna at Gausganj** On July 22, thousands of dead fish were found floating along a 5-km stretch of the Yamuna River from Nayapurwa to Manki Ghat in Gausganj, Kanpur Dehat, alarming local residents. According to the Fisheries Department, the fish kill may have been caused by polluted or chemical-laden water flowing from upstream, which likely increased the biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) and reduced dissolved oxygen levels in the river. Officials from the Fisheries Department and the Pollution Control Board that there are no nearby industrial units, indicating that polluted runoff, silt, and waste carried from upstream areas may be responsible. The large-scale fish mortality during the breeding season has raised concerns about the survival of fish species. Regional Pollution Control Officer Manoj Chaurasia said that during the monsoon, silt and various types of waste are washed into the river, adversely affecting aquatic life.

Oct. 2026 **Mass fish death in Yamuna in Baghpat** A mass fish death incident has occurred in Yamuna river in Baghpat on Oct. 13 night, reportedly due to polluted water. Their bodies were found along the riverbanks on Oct. 14 morning. Local residents alleged that fish had died in the past as well because chemically contaminated water was discharged into the Yamuna. They demanded that the drains discharging into the river be closed.

Delhi: Mass fish death in Yamuna's Wildlife enthusiast and conservationist Hemant Garg, who spotted the dead fish on Oct. 14 night, said thousands had been seen upstream, extending to Shank numbers 10, 11 and 12. Boatman Ranjan Mukhia said the water had developed a strong smell and the deaths were not confined to one stretch. Other boatmen upstream had also reported dead fish, he said, adding that carcasses had to be removed to prevent further deterioration in water quality.

The New Delhi Nature Society shared videos of the incident on social media and referred to local claims that chemical waste was being discharged from Haryana. Yamuna activist Pankaj Kumar said he had written to the Delhi Pollution Control Committee, seeking urgent intervention. Bhim Singh Rawat, SANDRP, said the recurring deaths in a "relatively cleaner stretch" were deeply concerning. He pointed out that Yamuna does not maintain an adequate minimum flow. Meanwhile, untreated chemical waste from drains in Karnal and Panipat continues to flow directly into the river.

A similar incident was reported near Burari in May 2025, when visuals showed thousands of dead fish floating in the river. In May 2026, hundreds of fish also died at Sanjay Lake in East Delhi amid a heatwave and falling water levels. The fishermen have been witnessing such fish deaths for the past three years, sometimes every two or three months, and sometimes more frequently, every two weeks. They claim that the water flows down from Panipat, Sonipat, and often they even get calls from fishermen upstream to warn them that fishes in their area have already begun dying out.

Nov. 2026: **Who is responsible for 3 mass fish deaths in Yamuna in 1 month?** At least three incidents of mass fish mortality in the Yamuna within a month have raised serious concerns about pollution control measures and the failure of government agencies to protect the river's remaining aquatic life. The incidents were reported in the relatively cleaner stretch of the river upstream of Delhi. Despite the seriousness of these incidents, their causes remain unconfirmed as no conclusive investigation report was done or made public by Nov. 19, 2026

Chambal; June 2026: **Rajasthan: Mass fish kill in Gambhiri river** Thousands of fish have died due to pollution in Gambhiri River, known locally as the "Ganga of Chittor", after rainwater carried untreated sewage from drains into the river. Following rainfall two days ago, contaminated water from city drains flowed into the river, polluting the water and causing the fish to die. Dead fish were first spotted floating near Maharana Pratap Setu on June 25 evening, with their numbers increasing significantly by June 2027.

Mukesh Nahata, President of the Chittauri Aatham Mahotsav Committee, said after the heavy rain on Wednesday night after which the drain water flowed into the Gambhiri River. "The river

has been heavily polluted after sewage flowed into it. Due to a broken drain, the city's sewage is flowing directly into the Gambhiri River. This polluted the river and caused fish to die." Nahata said the district administration and the municipal council should undertake immediate cleanup operations to remove the dead fish and stop untreated waste from entering "the river before the situation worsens." "Social organisations should step forward to help clean up the Ganga of Chittor."

Nov. 2026: **Chambal turning red in Nagda** A team of the Pollution Control Board conducted an investigation on Nov. 17 after hundreds of fish were found dead in the Chambal river in Nagda and the water appeared red. Initial tests indicate the presence of acid in the water, though this will only be confirmed after the report is received. About four or five days ago, a large number of dead fish were found in the Chambal River. Following this, complaints were made about the water appearing red.

Pollution Control Board scientist HS Sharma expressed apprehension that chemical waste from some service centre or factory in Nagda might be reaching the river. He also acknowledged that many service centers in the city are operating illegally, but effective action is lacking. Industries in Nagda import and export various chemicals via trucks. These trucks are also washed at service centers in the city. Service centers are required by law to comply with environmental regulations, including the disposal of wastewater and chemical waste. It is suspected that some centers are not following these rules.

Betwa Basin; June 2026: **Bhopal: Hundreds of fish found dead in Lower Lake** Hundreds of fish were found dead on Sunday along the banks of Lower Lake (Chhota Talab), and local residents reported heaps of carcasses and a noticeable odor by evening. Officials stressed that a thorough investigation is needed before a definitive cause is announced and said measures to monitor water quality and prevent future incidents would be considered based on the PCB's findings. Lower Lake is not utilized for drinking. A similar die-off was recorded seven years ago, making the recurrence notable but not unprecedented.

Gomti; March 2026: **Dead fish report turns out to be a rumour** Dead fish washing ashore in the Gomti, in Itaunja's Hirapuram area, initially triggered an alarm, but has now been dismissed as a rumour by the police. Upon investigation, police found that the fish seen floating in the river had not died due to contamination or any environmental cause but were allegedly dumped into the river by a local engaged in fish business. The fish had reportedly died earlier in his personal pond, after which he disposed of them in the Gomti.

NARMADA BASIN

April 2026 **Fish found dead in Tapti river** Hundreds of fish were found dead at Rajghat in the Tapti River, Burhanpur on April 08 morning. Rising temperatures, which reached 41°C, and increasing river pollution are suspected as possible causes. Local residents complained about the river's poor condition and negligence in maintaining cleanliness. Municipal Commissioner Sandeep Shrivastava directed a team to inspect the site and investigate the cause of the fish deaths.

Nov. 2026: **Fish death in Man river** Small fish have died in the Man River passing through Bamti and Marghmal in Dharampur taluka. There are complaints that the color of the water is reddish during the day and yellow at night. People of Bamti, Marghmal, Bhamba and Nodhai villages are expressing their suspicion that chemical-rich water is being mixed in the river. Bamti-Ranpada Group Gram Panchayat Sarpanch Vijaybhai Naranbhai Paneria had submitted a written representation to the Mamlatdar on Nov 7, 2026. In it, he complained that the color of the river water has been changing for the last 15 days. The villagers demand that the authorities find the source of the pollution, immediately test the water in rivers, boreholes and wells, publish the sample report and take action against those responsible.

SUBERNAREKHA BASIN

March 2026: Jharkhand: Quintals of dead fish found At least four quintals of dead fish were found floating in river Subarnarekha - lifeline of Jharkhand - in Bhuiyandih and Agrico on March 31, which were sold by the nearby slum dwellers to fish traders, sparking river pollution concerns and health risks to the citizens of Jamshedpur, people familiar with the matter said on April 01. Subarnarekha Multi-purpose Project (SMP) chief engineer Ram Niwas Prasad said the water in the river was already much polluted.

“Water released from Chandil Dam falls into river Kharkai after flowing for 30 kms and before its confluence into the Subarnarekha, industrial discharges and effluents are discharged into the water from Adityapur Industrial Area and Jamshedpur. This further pollutes the water,” Prasad told the media. “Another problem is the water hyacinths covering vast tracts of river Subarnarekha alongside Jamshedpur - near XLRI, water pump house area - blocking sunlight from the river surface, reducing the level of dissolved oxygen in the water and creating a conducive atmosphere for mosquito breeding,” Umesh Das, an environmentalist, said.

Expressing concern Jamshedpur (West) MLA Saryu Roy on April 02, 2026 directed the local administration to clean the waste which has been dumped in the river. Demanding a probe, Roy said, "The death of fish must be probed as Subarnarekha and Kharkai rivers which flow by Jamshedpur and serve as lifelines to 15 lakh people of the city.”

Taking cognizance of the matter, the NGT in May 2026 formed a three-member joint committee to investigate large-scale pollution and the incident of fish deaths. The applicant further alleged that despite repeated concerns and judicial interventions over the years, major urban local bodies, including Jamshedpur Notified Area Committee (JNAC), Mango Municipal Corporation, Jugsalai Municipality, and Adityapur Municipal Corporation, have failed to establish adequate sewage treatment infrastructure. The matter was to be heard on Aug. 10.

MAHANADI BASIN

April 2026: Odisha: Dead fish found floating in Paradip river Hundreds of dead fish were found floating in the Kapiljora river near Paradip in Jagatsinghpur district on April 12 morning, prompting officials from OSPCB to visit the site and collect water and fish samples to determine the cause of deaths. Many locals gathered near the river to collect the dead fish, while others alleged that industrial pollution in Paradip was responsible for the incident. The OSPCB officials blamed the locals.

May 2026: Chhattisgarh: Toxic discharge turns 2 rivers black The Chhattisgarh High Court took suo motu cognizance of alarming industrial pollution in the state's two rivers and observed that the situation reflects a "deeply disturbing and regressive state of affairs" and raises serious concerns over regulatory failure. Acting on media reports, a division bench of Chief Justice Ramesh Sinha and Justice Ravindra Kumar Agrawal on May 4 flagged the deteriorating condition of river ecosystems due to unchecked industrial discharge in the Shivnath and Kharun rivers.

The court noted reports of mass fish deaths in Shivnath river near Mohbhatta-Dhuma village, about 27km from Bilaspur. Investigations linked the pollution to the alleged discharge of untreated, spirit-contaminated effluents from a liquor manufacturing unit. The contamination reportedly turned the river water black, killing lakhs of aquatic organisms and posing health risks to nearby residents, including respiratory issues and skin irritation. Environmental damage has also spread to surrounding land and vegetation, with trees reported to have blackened and withered.

The bench termed the situation a "systematic failure in enforcement" by state authorities and the Chhattisgarh environment conservation board. It noted continued inaction despite earlier judicial directions. "The rivers, once sustaining biodiversity and human life, are now reported to have become unfit even for basic use," the court observed, criticizing the state for regulatory lapses and non-compliance. As part of its directive, the court impleaded a distillery company as a respondent and directed secretary of the environment conservation board and the unit

concerned to file personal affidavits detailing steps taken to curb pollution. The board has also been asked to submit a comprehensive action plan against polluting industries.

KRISHNA BASIN

April 2026: **Maharashtra: Nira river mass fish death** As per this April 06 report he discovery of a large number of dead fish in the Nira river over the last two days sparked widespread concern among villagers of Baramati tehsil. Preliminary findings are pointing to industrial pollution, prompting villagers to accuse the MPCB of failing to act despite repeated warnings. The incident has triggered sharp reactions from villagers, who depend on the Nira river for irrigation and daily use. Residents from nearly 20 villages said the latest episode is part of a recurring pattern of pollution that has steadily degraded the river over the years.

June 2026: **Pune: Mass fish death in Indrayani** As per June 15 report dead fish in large numbers were found floating in the Indrayani River near Dehu in Pune district, raising serious concerns over worsening river pollution just weeks before the Ashadhi Wari pilgrimage. Environmentalists suspected deteriorating water quality, possibly due to untreated sewage, industrial effluents or low dissolved oxygen levels. Residents and environmental activists have expressed concern after dozens of dead fish were found floating in the Indrayani River near Dehu on June 13, once again drawing attention to the river's worsening pollution ahead of the annual palkhi procession of Sant Tukaram Maharaj. The incident comes just weeks before thousands of warkaris are expected to gather in Dehu for the Ashadhi wari pilgrimage. Dinkar Jadhav, a local resident said a similar incident was reported last year and alleged that inadequate river-cleaning efforts had allowed large stretches of the river between Yelwadi and the Gatha Temple to become clogged with water hyacinth.

Sept. 2026: **Pune: Mass Fish Death in Mula river** A large number of fish were found dead in the Mula river at Pimple Nilakh on Sept. 11, raising concerns over the suspected discharge of untreated and chemically contaminated wastewater into the river. The deaths are particularly alarming as the river has a high flow during the monsoon. Despite this, a large number of dead fish were seen floating on the water surface near Ingawale Chowk in Pimple Nilakh. Environmentalists suspect that the contaminated water caused a sharp drop in dissolved oxygen levels in the river, resulting in the death of the fish.

In a report filed before the NGT on Oct. 29, the Pune Metropolitan Region Development Authority (PMRDA) told the Tribunal that it has undertaken a Rs. 500 cr project to prevent untreated domestic wastewater from entering the Mula-Mutha river and to restore its polluted stretches. A joint committee report dated July 9, 2026, found that water samples collected upstream of the Pimple Nilakh crematorium showed high levels of organic pollution and severe depletion of dissolved oxygen due to the discharge of untreated domestic sewage. The report linked these conditions to fish deaths on Sept. 23, 2024.

Sept. 2026: **Mass fish deaths spotted in Indrayani** Sept. 15 report on mass fish kill in Indrayani river near Alandi temple, raising fresh concerns over the region's spiralling river pollution. The dead fish were discovered just meters away from Alandi temple, a prominent pilgrimage site that draws hundreds of thousands of devotees from across Maharashtra. Environmental activists stated that such incidents have become alarmingly frequent, alleging that local authorities have failed to curb illegal discharge of pollutants into the water.

Oct. 2026: **Third mass fish death in Indrayani** According to sources, hundreds of fish have died since Oct. 14 due to highly contaminated water in the river. The villagers of Alandi have threatened the Pollution Control Board (PCB) to curb the pollution, or else they will bring a pile of dead fish and dump it at the Board's office. Crores of rupees have been spent over the last decade on the Indrayani River clean-up project, as the problem of pollution has persisted. Villagers have raised questions about the actual benefits of river clean-up projects, for which tenders worth crores of rupees have been issued repeatedly. Instead of relying on temporary

cleaning drives, citizens have demanded that it is essential to identify the root sources of pollution and implement permanent solutions.

July 2026: **Karnataka: Mass fish death as Tungabhadra runs dry** This July 19 report mentions death of thousands of fish in the Tungabhadra river as water flow has reduced drastically due to deficient rainfall, raising concerns over the deteriorating river ecosystem in parts of Koppal district. The riverbed near Kakkaragol and Nandihalli villages in Siddapur hobli of Karatagi taluk has nearly dried up, leaving behind scattered pools of stagnant and muddy water. Villagers and environmental activists criticised the authorities for failing to maintain a minimum flow in the river from the Tungabhadra reservoir. They warned that unless water is released immediately, the region could face a drinking water crisis in the coming days.

KOSASTHALAIYAR BASIN

Aug. 2026: **Tamil Nadu: Mass fish death in Ennore Creek** Aquatic heat wave conditions caused by hot water discharge from NTECL Vallur's power plant may have been responsible for the Independence Day fish kill in Ennore Creek, fishers and activists say. Fisher accounts of the sequence of observations and tidal movement point to the Kuruvimedu and Railway Bridge Canals as the likely source of the cause of the fish kill. Fishers and Save Ennore Creek campaign have demanded a thorough investigation to fix responsibility for the Independence Day Fish Kill.

The incident also revived concerns among fishing communities about the long-term impact of industrial pollution on their livelihoods. Fishers recalled the 2023 CPCL oil spill, saying fish and prawn populations in the creek took more than a year to recover. They fear the latest incident could similarly affect fish stocks and fishing incomes for months.

The Save Ennore Creek group and Kattukuppam fishers have demanded compensation for the losses suffered by fishing communities and called for the implementation of the NGT's July 2022 order directing the ecological restoration of Ennore Creek with meaningful participation from fisher communities. On Aug. 21, the Minister for Environment V.K. Rajeev said a four-member expert committee has been formed to probe the mass death of fish.

In Oct. first week, fishermen from eight Ennore hamlets planned to block sewage entry points into the creek and Kosasthalaiyar river by dumping sandbags, saying authorities have not acted after mass fish deaths a month ago. More than 8,000 fishermen agreed to plug about 10 suspected sewage-intrusion points next week. The sites are along the creek near Katukkupam, Mugathuvarakuppam and Thazhankuppam, and along Buckingham Canal.

"This is our way of protesting against the govt," said R L Srinivasan, a fisher leader. "A Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) report said sewage contamination caused fish deaths, yet no action has been taken to solve the issue. We have suffered for years because industries and civic agencies discharged treated effluent and sewage into the river," he said, adding, "People are now afraid to consume fish from Ennore."

GODAVARI BASIN

March 2026: **Telangana: Thousands of fish die in Manjeera river** Chemical waters, especially coming from Nakkavagu, are turning the Manjiramma River into a death trap. The death of thousands of fish in the vicinity of Palpanur, Fasalwadi and Gaudicharla in Hatnura mandal is causing a stir. There have been many such incidents in the past. Every time a fish dies, officials come and collect samples. But the fishermen are expressing their grief that there is no action. The people of the villages surrounding Nakkavagu are facing various problems as they are unable to drink or use this water. The locals are angry that the company owners are looking for profits and are discharging waste into the river without treating it. They are questioning whether there is anyone who can protect the Manjeera from the pollution that is harming the livelihood of the fishermen.

July 2026: **Andhra Pradesh: Hundreds of fish found dead in Godavari** A large number of fish fingerlings were found dead in the Godavari River at Yanam, causing concern among residents and fishermen. Residents have urged the Fisheries Department and the Pollution Control Board to collect water samples and conduct scientific tests to ascertain the exact cause of the fish deaths. They have also demanded an immediate inquiry into the incident and requested the authorities to reveal the findings at the earliest.

Oct. 2026: **Thousands of fish died in Vashishta Godavari** The death of thousands of fish in the Vashishta Godavari river near Narasapuram in West Godavari district is causing a stir locally. For the past two days, a large number of fish have been found dead and floating in the river. The death of not only small fish but also large fish weighing 7 to 8 kg is worrying fishermen. Fishermen claim that some aqua factories in the Narasapuram area are discharging chemical waste directly into the river without proper treatment. Whether the fish deaths are due to waste from aqua factories or are there other reasons, such as reduced oxygen levels in the water, will only become clear after the test reports are received.

Dr. Bolloju Ahmed Alibaba, Head of the Zoology Department of Kakinada PR Government College, said that the Kanaganta fish migrate from the sea to the brackish water areas of Gautami Godavari. He explained that if the salinity in the water suddenly decreases, they may not be able to withstand the change and die. Yanam Fisheries Assistant Director Dadala Gonteyya also recalled that last year too, a similar situation arose when a large amount of freshwater from Godavari was released into the sea. He said that the current release of about one lakh cusecs of flood water from Dhavaleswaram barrage into the sea has reduced the salinity of the water and this may be the main reason for the deaths of Kanagantha fish.

Sept. 2026: **Reasons behind 2024 mackerel deaths in Godavari estuary** A sudden influx of freshwater, sharp drop in salinity and increased ammonia toxicity likely caused the mass mortality of Indian mackerel in the lower Godavari estuary in July 2024, according to a scientific study. Heavy rainfall in the upstream catchment on July 4 & 5 brought a strong surge of freshwater into the estuary, sharply diluting the water. The resulting fall in salinity is believed to have subjected the predominantly marine fish to osmotic stress. At the same time, the relatively high pH increased the proportion of toxic un-ionised ammonia, adding to the physiological stress on the fish.

CAUVERY BASIN

July 2026: **Tamil Nadu: Dead fish pile up in Cauvery bank** As per July 29 report, thousands of fish have been found dead along the banks of the Cauvery river near Amma Mandapam in Trichy over the past few days. Officials suspect the deaths resulted from critically low water levels due to the absence of releases from the Mettur dam. The stretch of the Cauvery flowing through Trichy city between the Upper Anaicut (Mukkulathor Barrage) and the Grand Anicut (Kallanai Barrage) is dry in most places, with only stagnant water remaining in a few stretches at extremely shallow depths. Meanwhile, activists have called on the state government to take measures ensuring the flow of Cauvery river water as early as possible to prevent further loss of river fauna.

West Flowing Rivers Tapi-Tadri

June 2026; Maharashtra **Thousands of fish wash up dead in Palghar creek** Thousands of dead fish were found along the Satpati-Murbe creek in Palghar district on June 01, with officials suspecting extreme heat or water pollution as the possible cause of the mass deaths. Local residents spotted large numbers of dead chhot boi, pofal, salpa and other species of fish near Satpati Danda Pada village around 3 pm. Fishermen also reported unusually high catches of dead fish. Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) acting sub-regional officer Raju Wasave said water and fish samples will be tested. He noted that similar past incidents were linked to toxic solid waste from industrial units mixing with rainwater or low oxygen levels caused by heat.

West Flowing Rivers: Netravati-Gurupura

Feb. 2026 **Mangaluru: Dead fish, black water in Phalguni stream trigger alarm** Dead fish surfacing in a stream flowing into River Phalguni (Gurupura) near Rayikatte in Kuloor have reportedly triggered distress in the nearby areas. Nagarika Horata Samiti, Surathkal, alleged that untreated industrial effluents from units, including those in Baikampady industrial area, were discharged into streams that merged with the river. The committee said villagers had filed complaints over the past week, but no concrete action was taken.

According to the samiti, water up to Maravoor bridge and in the Kuloor stream became contaminated, with oxygen levels reportedly dropping to zero, leading to fish deaths and a strong stench. While the district administration attributed the situation to soil dumped across the river for bridge construction near Thannirbhavi, the committee said the issue appeared more serious, pointing to blackened industrial discharge flowing through the Thokur and Kudambur streams.

Though NGT's Chennai Bench earlier took suo motu cognisance, the committee alleged that only superficial measures were implemented. The samiti demanded a comprehensive probe and stringent action against responsible industries, warning of protests, including a gherao of Pollution Control Board office, if no steps were taken to contain pollution, said convener Muneer Katipalla. (The river is also known as the Gurupura river, Pachamagaru river or Kulur river.)

May 2026: **Phalguni fish kill** Residents living along stretches of the Gurupura River near Kenjar and downstream of the Maravoor vented dam have begun getting their well water tested following the recent mass fish deaths reported in the area. Regarding the fish death incident, Fernandes said preliminary findings by the KSPCB suggest a malfunction at the Panchanady STP. Samples have also been collected from the spot where fish were found dead.

Locals alleged that untreated and toxic waste released from nearby industries is polluting the river and severely affecting the surrounding environment. They claimed that the issue has persisted for years, but no permanent action has been taken despite repeated complaints to authorities and public representatives.

The issue is not limited to Malavoor alone. Several water sources under the Bajpe panchayat limits are reportedly facing similar pollution-related problems. Frustrated over the continued inaction, the gram panchayat has now warned of launching public protests if immediate corrective measures are not taken.

The incident has once again raised serious concerns about environmental degradation in the name of development. Residents say unchecked industrial activity and alleged negligence by civic authorities have pushed the lifeline Phalguni river into a dangerous state. Whether the shocking sight of dead fish floating across the river will finally prompt authorities into action, or whether residents will continue to suffer, remains to be seen.

June 2026: **Fish kill along Phalguni** A fish kill was reported on June 06 along the Phalguni river near Bengre, Sulthan Battery and Bokkapatna, locals said, days after environmental activists flagged pollution and demanded the removal of a temporary coffer bund built for a bridge between Tannirbhavi and Sultan Battery. Locals have alleged that rising pollution levels, caused by the coffer bund obstructing water flow, led to fish deaths. Many residents have also complained of rashes and irritation upon contact with the water. According to locals, a portion of the coffer bund was reportedly removed on June 06.

Fish mortality incidents had previously been reported during the summer in areas including Kuloor, Baikampady, Jokatte and Maravoor when water levels were low. However, fishermen said this is the first such incident reported in the Bengre and Sultan Battery regions. While local fishermen blame chemical contamination for the fish deaths, officials from the Karnataka

State Pollution Control Board said the situation was largely caused by stagnant polluted water trapped due to the bridge project's embankment. Authorities noted that sewage and other pollutants had severely degraded water quality and added that action had already been initiated against officials responsible for permitting the discharge of untreated wastewater into the river.

Ulhas Basin; Oct. 2026: **Mumbai's Kalu river throws up hundreds of dead fish** The sun rose on the Kalu as it did every other day. But on Oct. 05, along with it rose fish - hundreds, stippling the waters in grisly pointillism. Avinash Harad, an environmental activist who had led a group of six researchers on a biodiversity survey to a site on the river - the ferry crossing at Atali and Nandkar, villages on either side of the Kalu - said hundreds of fish had floated to the surface, dead or dying. "The fish died because of untreated effluents from upstream dyeing units in Ulhasnagar that flowed into the Kalu at high tide," Harad said. He said the sluice gates of the KT Dam in Titwala are opened during the rains, bringing a surge of water during high tide that conveys factory discharge downstream. "The fish - mostly catfish and tilapia - died along at least 1 km of the Kalu, just before it meets the Ulhas river."

Sabarmati River; June 2026: **Ahmedabad: Dead fish spark alarm** Large numbers of dead fish surfaced along the banks of the Sabarmati River in Ahmedabad following the lowering of the river's water level, triggering concerns over a possible environmental lapse and prompting questions about public health and the handling of the incident by civic authorities. Residents alleged that the fish deaths occurred after water was released or drained from the river, although the exact cause has not yet been officially confirmed. Locals have demanded that the authorities determine whether negligence contributed to the large-scale fish mortality, identify those responsible if any lapses are found, and take stringent action to prevent the sale or distribution of dead fish for human consumption.

Palar River; Aug. 2026 **Oxygen depletion kills a large number of Jalebi fish** A large number of fish, mainly Jalebi (Tilapia), were found dead in the Palar River near Ambur due to a sharp decline in dissolved oxygen levels. The Fisheries Department reportedly removed over 150 kg of dead fish and collected water and fish samples to investigate the cause. Local residents and fishermen alerted the authorities after noticing dead fish floating near the riverbank. The incident has raised concerns because the river is an important source of water for irrigation and domestic use. It supports agriculture across more than 1,200 acres and supplies water to 12 surrounding villages through over 15 borewells. Residents have demanded an investigation and cleaning of the waterbody. The report does not provide the final findings of the investigation.

Pennar Basin; July 2026 **Mass fish deaths in Kundu River in Andhra Pradesh** primarily reported around Nandyal (including areas like Kovelakuntla and Banaganapalle) have repeatedly been linked to water pollution, waste dumping, and low or stagnant water flow. For a similar incident in the river in July 2023, the investigation reportedly linked the deaths to industrial effluents from SPY Agro Industries, Nandi Grains and Derivatives, Nandi Milk Dairy, and sewage from Nandyal town.

Periyar Basin; April 2026: **Kerala: Tons of dead fish found in Chitrapuzha** Mass fish kills in the Chitrapuzha River near Kakkanad in Kochi have been reported repeatedly, with a major incident in April 2026 linked to suspected industrial effluent and sewage discharges.

July 2026: **Two years on, Periyar fishers await compensation** Two years after the massive fish kill along the downstream of the Periyar River along the Eloor-Edayar industrial stretch in Ernakulam, the fisherfolk are yet to receive the compensation for the heavy loss suffered by them. Dead fish was found floating on a large-scale on May 21, 2024 from near the Pathalam bund and downstream following suspected release of effluents from industrial units. The Fisheries Department had recommended a compensation of about ₹13.75 crore - ₹7 crore for cage farmers and ₹6.75 crore for fishermen who make a living out of fishing in the river and waterbodies linked to it.

Relevant Reports:

Invasive fish transforming the Godavari ecosystem A recent study titled 'Exotic fish and aquatic ecosystem disservices in River Godavari' published in Current Science however reveals that Tilapia, an exotic and highly invasive fish, has rapidly proliferated and outnumbered the native fish found in the river, threatening biodiversity, the survival of other fish species in the river and the livelihoods of several fisherfolk who depend on the river for their fish catch.

The invasive Nile tilapia, introduced in India for aquaculture, is rapidly spreading in the upper stretches of the Godavari River and displacing native fish species. Surveys in 2025 found tilapia making up 20–70% of catches in some areas. Its spread, along with altered river flows, has reduced indigenous fish populations, damaged aquatic vegetation, and affected river ecology. Fisherfolk are also facing income losses because tilapia sells at much lower prices than native fish. Overfishing and use of small-mesh nets are further harming native fish while helping tilapia survive and multiply. The article calls for urgent community-led management, research, and policy action to control tilapia and protect native biodiversity and livelihoods.

Introduced fish thrive in Kashmir Native fish in the lakes and rivers of India's Kashmir Valley are under increasing pressure from pollution, habitat loss, dam construction and other human activities, a recent review finds. These same threats are also likely giving exotic fish introduced to these freshwater habitats an edge, researchers say.

Destructive fishing practices threaten Arunachal's rivers Dr R Sangno an angling enthusiast warns that illegal and destructive fishing methods such as electrofishing and fish bombing are severely damaging rivers and aquatic biodiversity in Arunachal Pradesh. The report says these practices kill not only fish but also eggs, larvae, aquatic insects, amphibians, and other freshwater organisms that form the base of river ecosystems. Experts and local anglers have observed a sharp decline in indigenous fish species and biodiversity in many rivers across the state.

SANDRP