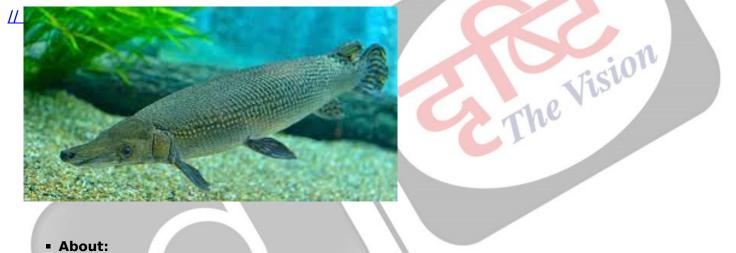# Alligator Gar Fish

Why in News?

The discovery of an **Alligator Gar fish** (Atractosteus spatula), an invasive species in **Kashmir's** Dal Lake has raised concerns.

- The **Lake Conservation and Management Authority (LCMA) and the Department of Fisheries are collaborating** to understand the extent of the invasion and its potential impact.

What are Alligator Gar Fish and the Risks Associated?

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- **About:**
  - The alligator gar **is a close relative of the bowfin species.** It is a ray-finned euryhaline fish (creature's ability to adapt to a wide range of water types that range in salinity) and is **one of the biggest freshwater fish in North America and the largest species in the 'gar' family.**
    - It is **found in some parts of India** such as Bhopal and Kerala.
  - They **grow rapidly and have a life span of 20-30 years.**
- **Protection Status:**
  - **IUCN**: Least Concern.
- **Concerns:**
  - Gar fish **can grow up to eight feet**. They can be dangerous for indigenous fish species. During winter, they can even sustain themselves in the cold waters of Dal **because the temperature they mostly live in is 11-23 degrees Celsius**
- **The Biological Diversity Act 2002:**
  - The Biological Diversity Act 2002 **prohibits the presence of invasive fish species that could harm natural fish populations.**

Dal Lake

- It is a lake in **Srinagar, the capital of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir** (J&K).
- It is one of the **world's largest natural lakes and the second largest lake** in J&K.
- It is integral **to tourism and recreation in Kashmir and is named the "Jewel in the crown**

of Kashmir" or "Srinagar's Jewel".
- It is also **an important source for commercial operations in fishing and water plant harvesting.**
- It covers an **area of 18 square kilometres and is part of a natural wetland including its floating gardens.**
  - The **floating gardens**, known as **"Raad"** in Kashmiri, blossom with lotus flowers during July and August.

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