

Variations in the crab diversity of the mangrove environment from Tamil Nadu, Southeast coast of India

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Abstract

The macro benthic faunal composition in the mangrove forest is diverse. Crabs are the most dominant species in many mangrove forests which constitute about 80% of the macro faunal biomass. Biodiversity of crabs in eight different mangrove environment of Tamil Nadu was investigated for the first time. Maximum number of crab species (46) was recorded in the Pichavaram and minimum (4) in Punnakayal mangroves. Two families of the crabs Grapsidae and the Ocypodidae are particularly associated with mangrove ecosystem. Among the crab species *Sesarma* and *Uca* species were dominant in almost all the stations. Grapsid crabs were the most dominant species. Neritic and *Avicennia* zones showed more number of crab species but less number of species was noted in slightly saline zone. The substrate suitability, tidal inundations and mangrove distribution were the possible factors for distribution of crabs in Tamil Nadu mangroves.

Keywords

species composition, zonation, distribution, population density, biosphere