Nesting materials of indigenous cichlids in Batticaloa lagoon, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Etroplus suratensis and E. maculatus are indigenous cichlids found in Sri Lanka. The two Etroplus species are sympatric and show segregation of habitat. The aim of this study was to investigate the nesting materials used by the by the two Etroplus spp., for which quantitative data were collected during a period of one year from an inlet of the Batticaloa Lagoon, Sri Lanka.

Data revealed that there was variation in the frequency of nesting material used by E. maculatus (G = 88.55, df = 8, p<0.0001). Excoecaria pole, Coconut fallen and Coconut were used significantly more as nesting material by E. maculatus. There was no significant difference among these four nesting materials (df=3, p=0.347). There was no significant difference when the above nesting materials were excluded in the G test (G=16.44, df=8, p=0.06).

The nesting materials of E. maculatus can be categorized into three types: mangrove materials, coconut materials and others. Nesting materials of E. suratensis can be classified into the four types: mangroves materials, coconut materials, other plant materials and others. Coconut materials were the highest (45.34%) followed by mangroves materials (39.13%). Other plant material were 10.55% and others consisted of carapace of crab, brick and polythene bag comprised of 4.96% of total nesting materials.

The results of the above study reiterate the fact that mangroves are essential for the existence of Etroplus species since they are very important to the cichlids to nest.

Keywords
nest building, litterfall, suitable substrate