

# **OBSERVATIONS ON THE BOTTOM SEDIMENTS AND BENTHOS OF THE MORATUWA-PANADURA ESTUARY**

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The bottom sediments and benthic fauna of the lowermost 7 kms of the Moratuwa-Panadura estuary were studied as part of a study of the Hydrobiology of the estuary. For sediment analysis samples were collected from 47 points over the study area. The study of benthos was based on monthly samples collected from four selected stations.

Four textural classes of sediments were recognised and their distribution in the study area mapped. The distribution of benthic species has been studied in relation to these classes of sediments.

The total number of benthic species collected was 32. The largest number (25 spp) was collected near the mouth and the smallest number (15) at the station furthest away from the mouth. The fauna belonged to 3 major taxa — Polychaeta, Crustacea and Mollusca. For most of the study period polychaetes dominated the station furthest away from the mouth, molluscs were dominant at the station nearest the mouth while crustacea were dominant at the stations in between.