

A PRELIMINARY SURVEY OF ESTUARINE BENTHIC FAUNA OF FOUR
COASTAL WATER BODIES IN THE WEST COAST OF SRI LANKA

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The littoral benthic fauna of Puttalam Lagoon, Chilaw Lagoon, Negombo Lagoon and Mundel Lake were studied for a period of one year. Puttalam Lagoon (25% - 55%) and Mundel Lake (3% - 55%) were hypersaline and Negombo Lagoon (6% - 36%) and Chilaw Lagoon (5% - 48%) euryhaline for most parts of the year.

The number of benthic species decreased from the Puttalam Lagoon in the dry zone to the Chilaw Lagoon in the intermediate zone via Mundel Lake. The increase in the density of benthos in the Negombo Lagoon situated in the wet zone was partly attributed to the wide variation in salinity at the two ends of the lagoon. Amphipods dominated the Puttalam and Negombo Lagoons and Mundel Lake, but polychaetes dominated the Chilaw Lagoon. The abundance of amphipods and polychaetes in the benthos of these coastal water bodies is a sharp contrast with the insect larvae abundant in the benthos of the inland water bodies (Fernando & Indrasena, 1969).

References

Fernando, C.H. & Indrasena, H.H.A. (1969) The freshwater fisheries of Ceylon. Bull. Fish. Res. Stn. Ceylon 20 (2): 101-134

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