

**D-17: Distribution of different soil types in the South West coast of Sri Lanka with special reference to shrimp culture development**

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Prawn farming has become a fast growing industry in Sri Lanka. Criteria for site selection are very important for the success of this aqua industry. Important physico-chemical characteristics of soil in site selection are discussed in this paper.

Soil samples were collected from potential areas suitable for aquaculture according to land use pattern along the South Western coast from Marawila to Kalpitiya. To facilitate the illustration of results, observations were made separately in 3 different areas around Chilaw, Mundal and Puttalam lagoons.

Wide range of textural groups were observed. Predominant groups in Puttalam lagoon were: sandy loam, loamy sand and sandy clay loam; in Mundal lagoon; sandy loam, loamy sand and sandy clay loam. In Chilaw lagoon, clay and sandy clay loam predominated.

Regarding soil acidity, the area around Mundal and Puttalam lagoons showed favourable limits for prawn culture, while in the Chilaw area the soil exhibited highly acidic conditions. Potential acid sulphate soil clusters were also recorded in areas around Chilaw lagoon.

Average organic matter content in Puttalam, Chilaw and Mundal lagoon areas was below 2%.

The areas around Mundal and Chilaw lagoons constitute 70% of the total potential areas for shrimp culture according to the soil survey.

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