

Community structure of clambeds in tropical estuary, Mangalore

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SUMMARY : A study was conducted to know the community structure of the clam beds of Mulky estuary in Mangalore. The seasonal and spatial variations in the qualitative and quantitative composition of the macrobenthic population indicated the dominance of mollusca, polychaetes and crustaceans. Higher populations were observed during the premonsoon and post monsoon season. The population density of macrobenthos varied between 228 to 915 no/m². Four species of polychaetes were recorded in clam beds in which *Seballaria* sp. and *Dendroneries* were the most abundant. Crustaceans were represented by amphipods, isopods, barnacles and crabs.. Molluscan population were represented by bivalves, and gastropods. Four species of bivalves were recorded in Mulki estuary among which, *Meretrix casta* and *Paphia malabarica* were the dominant. Bivalves contributed significantly to the macrobenthic population.

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