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Mangrove Associated Molluscs of India

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Phylum Mollusca, the second largest of invertebrates, comprises of soft bodied animals. They inhabit very diverse habitats like marine, estuarine, freshwater, terrestrial and arboreal. They play important role in the function and productivity of coastal mangrove swamps. The mangrove molluscs are mainly gastropods and bivalves. The molluscs that live on surface of substratum and mangrove plants belong to a category called epifauna and another category that lives buried in the sediments belong to infauna. Epifauna inhabits the stems, canopy, roots, logs, stumps, leaf litter, water pool, muddy substratum, and rocky surfaces associated with mangrove swamps. The members of infauna (usually the bivalves) burrow up to 10 cm down from the surface. In India about 200 species of molluscs were reported from mangrove areas of east and west coasts. In fact the true mangrove molluscs are few most others being opportunists. The attempt here has been to provide comprehensive check list of molluscs found in the Indian mangrove areas, compiled from various sources. This has been found to be an important necessity for coastal biodiversity studies in India. In Uttara Kannada District of Karnataka State, where field studies were carried out during 2010-12 period, using both quadrat and opportunistic methods, about 12 genera of gastropods and four genera of bivalves were found by us. Our investigations mainly covered the mangrove areas of the estuaries of the west flowing rivers from the Western Ghats namely Aghanashini, Gangavali, Kali, and Sharavathi.

Key words: Mangrove molluscs, India, Karnataka, Western Ghats.