

**DISTRIBUTION AND SPECIES RICHNESS OF HERPETOFAUNA IN THE  
ELATHUR TIDAL BACKWATERS, KOZHIKODE COASTLINE, INDIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

A unique variety of species can survive in brackish marshes when aqueous runoff from terrestrial habitats is diluted with saltwater tides. To account for the many kinds of herptiles, this study studied amphibians and reptiles in the Elathur Estuary along the Kozhikode Coastline. In the mangrove environments, swift comprehensive opportunistic daytime and nocturnal surveys were used to gather 109 individuals from 5 species of amphibians and 13 species of reptiles. The most prevalent amphibian species was *Duttaphrynus stomaticus* (44.5%), and the most prevalent reptile species was *Cerberus rynchops* (13.10 %). 38.89% of the species make use of aquatic ecological niches. The findings of this study of amphibians and reptiles in brackish water environments will broaden the array of habitats that these organisms may inhabit. Given the numerous habitat fragmentations that have been noticed as a result of rapid urbanization and city sprawl, the mangrove area should receive priority conservation.

**Keywords:** *Cerberus rynchops*; *Duttaphrynus stomaticus*; Elathur estuary; herpetofauna