

DISTRIBUTION AND DIVERSITY OF MANGROVE SPECIES ALONG THE COASTLINE OF MAHE TOWN, TERRITORY OF PONDICHERRY, INDIA

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Abstract

Mahe Town, a territory of Pondicherry on the Western Coast of India in the coastal vicinity of Kerala, has been known to have 200 ha of the total mangroves of Kerala. A study was conducted during January 2018 to December 2018 for a period of one year at the creeks of Mahe River, also called as the Mayyazhipuzha. During the study period, a total of 31 species of mangroves were identified in the region together pre-dominated by *Avicennia officinalis* and *Bruguiera cylindrica*. Other species that are common include *Sonneratia alba*; *Rhizophora apiculata*; *Kandelia candel* and *Acanthus ilicifolius*. The mangrove regions were noted to be disturbed and disrupted patches were noticed around the creek. These mangrove ecosystems are home to a large number of fauna including rare migratory birds and herpetofauna. The large scale patches can be denoted as the older stands of the predominance of mangroves in the region. As a matter of fact, mangroves have been noted to have narrowed down continuously in density to scattered patches and linings during the recent times due to large scale developmental activities and vast expansion of the city.