

9. INTERNATIONAL GAP SUMMIT SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH CONGRESS

1-3 July 2022

Adiyaman, TURKEY

A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY OF HERPETOFAUNA AT THE GORAI MANGROVE SWAMPS IN THE MUMBAI COASTLINE, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Mangroves are coastal forest developments that are surrounded by riverine areas and salt water that is swamped often by tides. Mangroves, which grow in the intertidal zone and at the mouth of estuaries, provide vital biome for a wide range of marine and terrestrial plant and animal life. Wetlands are essential for a healthy maritime ecosystem. Between May 2017 and June 2018, a comprehensive survey of the Gorai Mangroves' herpetofauna species composition was attempted. The study's aim was to find out how diverse the herpetofauna is across the broader mangrove forests. Amphibians (frogs and toads), as well as reptiles (lizards), were identified in a terrestrial transect using active searches and personal monitoring, while reptiles (snakes) were randomly gathered during the survey. The findings reveal three amphibian families: Bufonidae, Ranidae, and Rhacophoridae, with a total of 13 species. Ophids (serpents), Saurians (lizards), and Testudines were among the reptile species encountered. Twelve species from four families, Gekkonidae, Agamidae, Varanidae, and Scincidae, dominated the order Sauria. Seven non-poisonous, four semi-venomous, and six venomous snake species were found in the Serpentes order. With six species representing four non-venomous and three semi-venomous snakes, Colubroids dominated the ophids. Only one species, *Lissemys punctata*, was found in the Testudines (Trionyx). Because of the proximity to the sea, the population of herpetofauna at the sites is rather modest, despite the fact that these animals are tough to locate owing to their unique characteristics.

Keywords: Gorai, mangroves, herpetofauna, amphibians, ophids, saurians