

Estuarine Biology Regional Centre Zoological Survey of India, Gopalpur-on-Sea, Odisha



Estuaries are one of the most productive and diverse ecosystems along the coastal regions of the world. They provide an extensive variety of habitats for diverse animal and plant species. In fact, they play a pivotal role in rural livelihood by providing valuable resources like fish, molluscs, crabs, prawns, shrimps etc. and thus constitute an important socio-economic entity. India is blessed with vast extension of estuaries, as it is a peninsular country. An estuary may be defined as “a semi-enclosed coastal body of water, which has a free connection with the open sea and within which sea water is measurably diluted with freshwater derived from land drainage”. The entire 6,100 km length of coastline of Indian mainland has rich estuarine and other brackish water resources.

The Estuarine Biology Regional Centre at Gopalpur-on-Sea, Odisha, is one of the 16 Regional Centres of Zoological Survey of India. It was established in 1980 under the development activities of the Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Govt. of India during the Sixth Five Year Plan. The main objective of the Centre is to conduct survey, exploration and research on the faunal diversity of estuaries, backwaters, lagoons and mangrove ecosystems of India.

Area of operation and jurisdiction of the Centre are estuaries, mangroves and lagoons of East and West Coast of India.



Major Programmes Undertaken

- ▶ Fauna associated with shoreline habitats, Southern Orissa
- ▶ Fauna of Chika Lake, Orissa
- ▶ Fauna of Rushikulya Estuary, Orissa
- ▶ Fauna of Mahanadi Estuary, Orissa
- ▶ Fauna of Godavari Estuary, Andhra Pradesh
- ▶ Fauna of Krishna Estuary, Andhra Pradesh
- ▶ Fauna of Vamsadhara and Nagavali Estuaries, Andhra Pradesh
- ▶ Fauna of Nalaban Wildlife Sanctuary, Orissa
- ▶ Fauna of Simlipal National Park & Tiger Reserve, Orissa
- ▶ Fauna of Bahuda Estuary, Orissa
- ▶ Fauna of Nuanai Estuary, Orissa
- ▶ Fauna of Brahmani-Baitarani Estuarine complex
- ▶ Ichthyofauna of Cauvery Estuary w.s.r. to their ecology, diversity and distribution pattern



Areas Surveyed

Areas surveyed include the estuaries and lagoons of East Coast of India especially the estuarine areas of Rushikulya, Mahanadi, Bahuda, Chilika Lake of Odisha; Godavari, Krishna, Pennar of Andhra Pradesh and Cauvery of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry.

The protected areas surveyed as a special programme include Similipal Biosphere Reserve, Nalabali Wildlife Sanctuary and coastal areas of Odisha.



Major Scientific Contributions

Chilika Lake (Odisha, India), a Ramsar Site and the largest lagoon on the east coast of India, was surveyed from 1985 to 1987 by the Centre through a multidisciplinary team drawn from various research and academic institutions. The detailed report was published in year 1995, which includes limnology and faunal resources of the wetland from protozoa to mammals. The systematic status of each group based on the expedition materials are dealt in detail in the “Fauna of Chilika Lake” published by Zoological Survey of India.

Available Taxonomic Expertise

Taxonomic expertise on Fishes, Aquatic insects and Mollusca are available currently at the Centre.



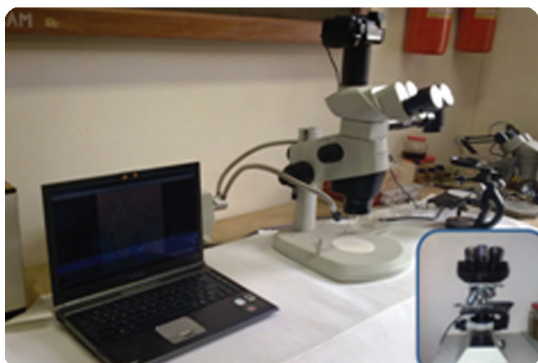
National Zoological Collection (NZC)

The NZCs maintained at the Centre contains 28,731 identified specimens, including both vertebrates and invertebrates mainly representing fauna of estuarine, lagoon, backwater and mangrove ecosystems.



Modern Infrastructure and Advanced Research Facilities

The Centre is equipped with Olympus SZX10 automated stereomicroscope, with attached high definition CCD camera, Olympus CH20i trinocular microscope, binocular research microscopes and other equipments which are necessary for taxonomic studies.



Publications

9 books and 70 research papers were published in various national/international journals by the scientists of the Centre.

- ▶ Rushikulya Estuary, Orissa
- ▶ Fauna of Chilka Lake
- ▶ Fauna of Mahanadi Estuary, Orissa
- ▶ Faunal resources of Nalaban Wildlife Sanctuary, Chilka, Orissa
- ▶ Fauna of Similipal National Park and Tiger Reserve, Mayurbhanj, Orissa
- ▶ Fauna of Godavari Estuary, Aandhra Pradesh
- ▶ Fauna of Krishna Estuary
- ▶ Fauna of Vamsadhara & Nagavali Estuaries
- ▶ Fauna of Bahuda Estuary, Orissa



Library

The library of the Centre has acquired 3,271 books and 20 journals/periodicals are subscribed.

Museum

The Regional museum displays the important estuarine fauna, which is an attraction to the students and tourists visiting Gopalpur-on-Sea. The museum is open to visitors on all working days.



Other Extension Activities

The Centre is rendering identification and advisory services to students, researchers and scientists of other institutes.

Invited talks/lectures on various subjects related to faunal diversity and biodiversity conservation are delivered to school and college students.

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