

DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE OF MOLLUSCAN CRYPTOFAUNA FROM KARAICHALLI ISLAND (GULF OF MANNAR), SOUTHEASTERN COAST OF INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Replicate samples of live coral, dead massive coral, dead branching coral, and live & dead coral were studied. The surface area, volume, percentage cover, biomass and percentage available living space were determined for molluscan cryptofauna in each habitat. The gastropods *Pyrene versicolor*, *Drupa* sp. and *Cerithium* sp. were common in branching corals. The bivalves *Saccostrea cucullata*, *Arca* sp., *Isognomon* sp., *Pinctada* sp. and *Lithophaga* sp. were common in dead parts of ramose corals. Mytilids were rare in living parts of ramose corals. *Pyrene* sp., *Drupa* sp., *Cerithium* sp. and *Lambis* sp. were found crawling on the surface of the massive corals.