

Observation of extensive bed of giant mangrove whelk in Minicoy, Lakshadweep

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Terebralia palustris (Linnaeus, 1767) is a species of Caenogastropod belonging to the family Potamididae, distributed widely in Indo-Pacific region and African coast. An extensive bed of *T. palustris* approximately 500 m long and 70 m wide, appearing like a canal stretching into the beach was observed along the south west coast of Minicoy Island, Lakshadweep. An average of 85 snails per square meter area was found in the intertidal mangrove mud flats. The population was dominated by adults (82 mm size) followed by sub adults (55mm size) and juveniles (25mm size). The mangrove whelks are an integral component of mangrove ecosystems as they retain primary carbon by consuming leaf litter. Their reproductive cycle is closely associated with mangroves. The females oviposit at low tide and deposit egg masses on pneumatophores, roots, trunks and fallen branches of mangroves. It was observed that while larger snails of *T. palustris* can only eat mangrove leaf litter, detritus is the main food item consumed by juveniles. A detailed study on the feeding behavior



Terebralia palustris

of juvenile and adult snails can throw light on their role in biogeochemical cycle of intertidal mangrove mud flats.