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922 Primary productivity of populations of *Zoanthus* sp. in Minicoy Lagoon, Lakshadweep

Knowledge on algal association with animal cells particularly reef coelenterates has greatly increased in the recent years. Unicellular zooxanthellae are invariably present in all hermatypic corals. They are also present in many other reef coelenterates namely hydrozoans, scyphozoans and anthozoans. Their importance as primary producers and their productivity are reported for the first time from Minicoy Lagoon of Lakshdweep Archipelago.

Anthozoan colonies identified as *Zoanthus* sp. are seen along the *Thalassia* beds (Fig. 1) in the intertidal belt of the lagoon. They were collected intact and drained. Wet weight was taken immediately and 400 g samples were weighed separately and incubated in 50 l of freshly collected seawater.

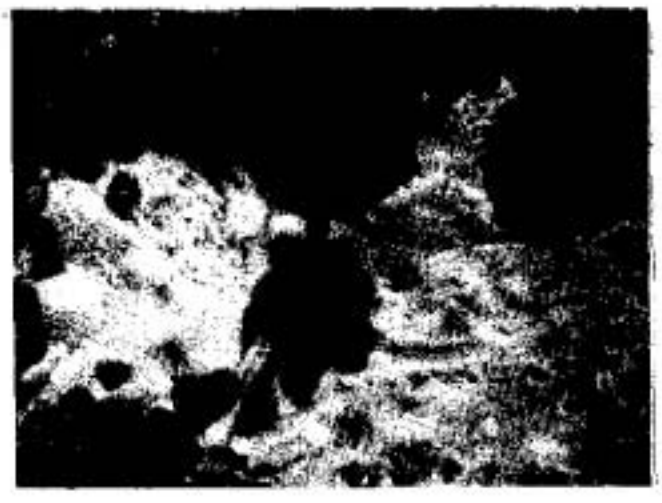

Fig. 1. *Zoanthus* sp. growing along the *Thalassia* bed in Minicoy Lagoon.

The primary productivity (P) of *Zoanthus* sp. from Minicoy lagoon (Fig.1) was estimated at 6.346 gC/kg (wet wt.)/day and the oxygen consumption (R) was at 3.97 gC/kg (wet wt.)/day indicating a P/R ratio of 1.6. The primary productivity rate of *Zoanthus* sp. in Minicoy Lagoon was comparable to that of seagrass and seaweeds of this area (Qasim, S.Z. and P.M.A. Bhattathiri (1971), *Hydrobiol.*, **38**: 29-38.; Kaladharan, P. (1998), *Indian J.Fish.*, **45 (2)** : 211-215) stressing the popultion's significance in the primary productivity of Minicoy atol.

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