

Composition, abundance and distribution of aquatic Oligochaeta in Colombo (Beira) Lake

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The composition, abundance and distribution pattern of aquatic oligochaetes in Colombo (Beira) Lake were investigated from May 1992 to April 1993. Twenty two species of oligochaetes identified, composed of 3 species of Aelosomatidae, 17 species of Naididae and 2 species of Tubificidae. The populations of these worms fluctuated considerably throughout the study period. *Aulophorus michaelsoni*, *Branchiodrilus semperi*, *Pristina longiseta* and *Aulodrilus pigueti* were the most abundant species in the lake throughout the study period; *Stephensoniana trivandana* was highly abundant only in some months. The high abundance of oligochaetes was positively correlated with high organic matter contents in the bottom sediment, dissolved oxygen content, biochemical oxygen demand, nitrate and phosphate contents in the bottom water and rainfall whereas negative correlations were observed with salinity and conductivity in the bottom water ($P < 0.05$). Number of species and densities of worms in the saline areas of the lake were comparatively low. *Aulophorus michaelsoni*, *Dero dorsalis* and *Aulodrilus pigueti* were the most abundant species in this area.