

DEEPOR BEEL - A RAMSAR SITE OF INDIA: AN INTERESTING HOT-SPOT WITH ITS RICH ROTIFERA BIODIVERSITY

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Abstract: This study analyzed biodiversity of planktonic Rotifera of Deepor Beel, a Ramsar site of India and an important floodplain lake of the Brahmaputra river basin of northeast India. Our report of total 154 species, belonging to 38 genera and 20 families, from this wetland is one of the richest ever known for Phylum Rotifera and hypothesized environmental heterogeneity of this biodiversity 'hot-spot'. Three species are new to India, one species is new to northeast India and 20 species are new records from Deepor Beel. Our collections are characterized by occurrence of eleven biogeographically interesting elements namely the Australasian *Brachionus dichotomus reductus* and *Notommata spinata*; the Oriental *Brachionus donneri*, *Keratella edmondsoni*, *Lecane blachei* and *Filinia camasecla*; and the paleotropical *Lepadella discoidea*, *Lecane lateralis*, *L. unguitata*, *Testudinella greeni* and *T. brevicaudata*. A number of species showed regional distributional importance in the Indian sub-continent. The Rotifera taxocoenosis of this Ramsar site is characterized by 'tropical character', richness of the littoral-periphytonic species, occurrence of many small-sized taxa and qualitative importance of *Lecanidae* > *Brachionidae* > *Lepadellidae* > *Trichocercidae* while *Lecane* > *Lepadella* > *Brachionus* > *Trichocerca* are species-rich genera.

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