

33. OCCURRENCE OF *HALOPHILA BECCARII* ASCH.
FROM KUMBALA ESTUARY, KERALA¹

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Occurrence and distribution of sea grasses from Kerala coast have not received much attention. Nair *et al.* (1983) reported the occurrence of *Halophila gracilis* from Ashtamudi estuary. During a mangrove ecosystem

biodiversity study in September 2002, a dense patch of sea grass *Halophila* species was found growing with *Entromorpha intestinalis* in the tidal mud flats, where the substratum was silty, at the Kumbala estuary (12° 35' 47" N,

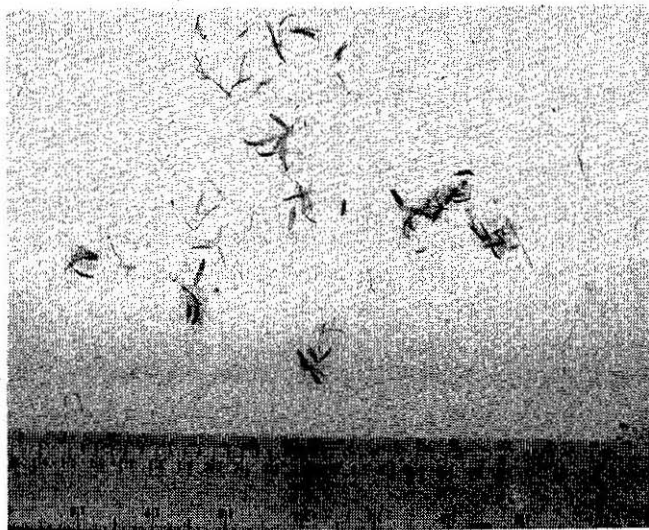


Fig. 1: *Halophila beccarii* collected from the Kumbala estuary, Kerala

74° 56' 29" E). It was later identified as *Halophila beccarii* Asch., hitherto not reported from the Kerala coast.

H. beccarii is a small submerged creeper, belonging to Family Hydrocharitaceae. Stipulate, elongated leaves 0.95-1.0 cm length and 0.15-2.0 cm width with a long petiole (1.0-1.5 cm). Except leaves most other parts of the plant remain underground. Flowers solitary, stalked with three petals and nine free stamens. Fruits are ellipsoidal, trilocular, 3.5 mm length and 1.5 mm width, bearing three seeds (Fig. 1).

Untawale and Jagtap (1977) reported this species from Mandovi estuary, Goa. They could not observe the flowers or seeds. They believed that this species might have migrated from Ceylon along the west coast (Jagtap and Untawale 1981).

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