



सीएसआईआर
CSIR
भारत का नवाचार इंजन
The Innovation Engine of India

OCEANCON-RCV50
National Conference on Strategic Use of
Ocean Resources for Enhancing India's
Blue Economy

March 20–21, 2026

ABSTRACT BOOK

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Absence of intertidal ascidians from a large part of east Indian coastline

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Abstract

Ascidians are Tunicata (Chordata) that are exclusively marine community. Work on ascidians of Indian waters was pioneered in 1915 and till date about 273 species of ascidians have been recorded but none from intertidal areas of West Bengal and Odisha, and only one from Andhra Pradesh. Intertidal zones of West Bengal coasts were surveyed between 2022 to 2025 for assessing the baseline diversity and distribution of ascidians. Ascidians were not found from the West Bengal coast. Their absence might be due to low salinity, high sedimentation load, absence of natural rocky shoreline and tide pool of Indian Sundarbans. The Digha coasts are however, not suffering from low salinity or high sedimentation load even after that ascidians were absent. It can be concluded that salinity is not the major limiting factor for ascidian distribution. Factors such as sedimentation load and geomorphological characteristics of the coastline shall not be overlooked while intertidal diversity and distribution of ascidians are assessed along the east coast of India.