

FAUNA OF INDIA CHECKLIST

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HEMICHORDATA

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ZOOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA
Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change

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Introduction: Hemichordata is a marine invertebrate phylum found from the shore to extensive range of depths and habitat of oceans. The phylum comprises of two classes i.e., Graptolithoidea and Enteropneusta. The classification is based mainly on the stomochord. The stomochord has been considered as homologue of the notochord present in all chordates, but structurally both are different. The faunal group is often found in exposed tidal flats, and can be identified by coiled rope like castings made by them. Enteropneusts are solitary in nature while Graptolithoidea are live in colonies. Fossil records are mostly found for Graptolithoidea but their internal anatomy is ambiguous as they have soft body without any hard skeleton. Hemichordates are either deposit feeder or suspension feeder in nature.

Global diversity: The phylum consists of 133 valid species till date world-wide, classified into two classes. Enteropneusta comprised of 110 species and Graptolithoides comprised of 23 species.

Diversity in India: Only 13 species of hemichordates are reported from Indian waters.

Diversity in States: Presented in table 1.

Table 1; Hemichordata of India, State-wise distribution

Sl. No.	State/UT	No. of Species
	INDIA TOTAL	13
1.	Gujarat	01
2.	Tamil Nadu	10
3.	Andaman & Nicobar	04
4.	Lakshadweep	03
5.	State unknown	04

Endemism: No endemism has been recorded from India.

Habitat: Hemichordates are found from intertidal to greater depth of the oceans. These burrowing animals are mostly found on the mudflats or ocean floor.

Ecological Significance: Hemichordates have importance as they are the bioturbators and large digging predators of the sea.

Human Significance: Hemichordates have no known direct significance on human society.

Threatened species: No species of hemichordates from India is assessed for IUCN threatened categories.

Protected Species as per WPA: Hemichordates are not listed under any schedules of Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Species under CITES: There is no species enlisted under the CITES Appendices.

Invasive alien species No hemichordate species is reported from India as invasive.

Gap areas: Works on Indian hemichordates are very scanty from Indian waters due to lack of taxonomist in this group. Comprehensive studies are required to explore the faunal group from the coasts of India.

Systematic list: Species list cited below (Table 2).

Table 2: Hemichordata of India

Sl. No.	Species
1.	<i>Mesoglossus bournei</i> Menon, 1904
2.	<i>Saccoglossus madrasensis</i> Rao, 1957
3.	<i>Glossobalanus elongatus</i> Spengel, 1904
4.	<i>Glossobalanus indicus</i> Rao, 1955
5.	<i>Glossobalanus parvulus</i> Punnett, 1906
6.	<i>Glossobalanus minutus</i> (Kowalevsky, 1866)
7.	<i>Ptychodera flava</i> Eschscholtz, 1825
8.	<i>Ptychodera viridis</i> Punnett, 1903
9.	<i>Balanoglossus carnosus</i> Müller in Spengel, 1893
10.	<i>Glandiceps bengalensis</i> Rao, 1955
11.	<i>Glandiceps coromandelicus</i> Spengel, 1907
12.	<i>Glandiceps hacksi</i> (Marion, 1885)
13.	<i>Cephalodiscus indicus</i> Schepotieff 1909

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