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ASSOCIATION OF 'MUDWORM' *POLYDORA LIGNI* WEBSTER WITH *MYTILOPSIS SALLEI* (RECLUZ) (POLECYPODA)

Among the several known species of *Polydora*, *P. ciliata*[1-5], *P. websteri*[6], *P. ligni*[7] and *P. hoplura*[8] have been frequently encountered as associates in shells of oysters from different countries. Incidence of *Polydera ligni* from Indian waters, however, has not been reported so far.

In the course of studies on the fouling bivalve *Mytilopsis sallei* (Recluz) incident at Visakhapatnam, 'blisters' were encountered in a large number of animals. Out of nearly 200 animals of *M. sallei* examined, about 20 specimens revealed the presence of these blisters which were found to harbour at least one worm each.

Regarding the nature of association of the worms with host some workers attribute oyster mortality to infection by *Polydora* sp. Extensive destruction of oyster beds in Australian waters has been attributed to infection by *P. ciliata* and *P. ligani*[2]. On examination of the nutritive value of infected and healthy oysters, Loosanoff and Engle[2] recorded that *P. websteri* did not cause any serious damage to the oysters in American waters but the same was stated to be responsible for the destruction of oysters in Dutch waters[9]. Presently no harmful effects could be noted in the host animals. It is, therefore, suggested that the association between *P. ligni* and *M. sallei* may be commensalic.

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