



DIVERSITY STUDIES ON COCKROACHES IN AND AROUND CHENNAI

NAGARAJAN D.¹, B. RADHA² and S. PRABAKARAN^{1*}

¹Marine Biology Regional centre, Zoological Survey of India, Chennai-600028, Tamil Nadu

²P.G & research department of Zoology, Pachaiyappa's College, Chennai-600030, Tamil Nadu

*Corresponding author email: prabakaranzsi@yahoo.co.in

ABSTRACT: Cockroaches are one of the oldest forms of living insects, commonly found in leaf litter, dead wood, and caves, with some species residing in tree bark and plant holes. In the order Blattodea, 7,570 species have been described globally, including 4,641 cockroach species and 2,929 termite species. This study explores the diversity of cockroaches in and around Chennai, yielding notable findings, including new records for the region. A total of 158 cockroach samples were recorded, representing four families, 11 genera, and 13 species. These findings enhance the understanding of cockroach biodiversity in urban and peri-urban environments, shedding light on their ecological roles and potential interactions with human habitats. The study underscores the importance of documenting insect diversity in rapidly urbanizing areas like Chennai, contributing to broader ecological and conservation efforts.

Keywords: *Diversity, Blattids, Cockroaches and Chennai*

Citation: D Nagarajan, Radha B and Prabakaran S (2024) Diversity studies on cockroaches in and around Chennai. Indian J Trop Biodiv 32(2): 140-148.

Received on: 15/07/2024; Accepted on: 20/11/2024

INTRODUCTION

Members of the order Blattodea, commonly known as cockroaches, derive their name from the Spanish word 'Cucaracha.' These insects are characterized by flattened bodies, long antennae, and ventrally projecting mouthparts. Their forewings are sclerotized tegmina that protect membranous hind wings. Cockroaches primarily rely on their legs for locomotion and exhibit incomplete metamorphosis with segmented

abdomens (Roeser, 1940). While historically considered monophyletic, the order is now viewed as paraphyletic due to the inclusion of termites.

Cockroaches play diverse ecological roles, serving as decomposers and prey for numerous predators. However, they also have significant economic and medical implications, including food contamination, disease transmission, and damage to crops and buildings (Roth and Gutierrez, 1998). Resilient and