

Record of the invasive mussel *Mytella strigata* (Bivalvia, Mytilidae) in Odiyur Lagoon, Southeast coast of India

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The American brackish-water, aka Charru, mussel *Mytella strigata* has recently emerged as an invasive alien species across the Indo-Pacific region. The present study documents the presence of *M. strigata* along the southeast coast of India. A field survey, conducted in May 2025, revealed its presence across four locations within the lagoon. The species was identified morphologically based on distinct shell features and hinge characteristics. They were observed in clumps on muddy substrates, attached using byssus threads to native bivalves such as *Magallana bilineata*, *Saccostrea cucullata*, *Isognomon ehippium* and *Perna viridis*. Besides, barnacles (*Amphibalanus* spp.) and tubicolous polychaetes were found to be fouling on the shells. Dead shells of the gastropod *Pirenella cingulata* and *Nassarius* spp. were also used as substrata for byssus thread attachment. The findings indicate a comparatively early stage of colonisation in the lagoon, as the mussel occurred in scattered clusters rather than forming continuous beds. The presence of *M. strigata* raises concerns about interspecies competition and altered benthic community dynamics. At present, there are no effective removal/eradication methods available for this species globally. Early-stage detection is an avenue to containment measures, such as physical removal, substrate change, and preventing the dispersal of the larvae.

Keywords: Early detection, invasive species, *Mytella strigata*, Odiyur Lagoon, species association.