

DISTRIBUTION AND SPECIES' COMPOSITION OF LEECHES (ANNELIDA:HIRUDINEA) IN THE AQUATIC HABITATS OF NEPAL

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Out of a total of 178 sites sampled on different occasions from November 1993 to December 1995, from an altitude of 80m to 3,802masl, aquatic leech fauna of Nepal were found on 26 sites only. The distribution was restricted mostly to Midland valleys and Dun valleys such as, Kathmandu, Pokhara, and Bharatpur. Occasional findings reported from the Middle Hills and Dang valleys are also presented. The fauna were very poorly distributed in the *Terai* belt and were missing in the higher mountain regions of the country such as the Inner Himalayan and the Fore Himalayan zones. Leeches belonging to three families with nine different species are listed. *Alboglossiphonia weberi*, *Alboglossiphonia annandalei* *Batracobdelloides reticulatus*, *Hemiclepsis marginata*, *Helobdella stagnalis*, and *Placobdelloides fulvus* of the family *Glossiphoniidae* and only one representative of the family *Salifidae* i.e. *Barbronia weberi*, are reported with illustrations. Furthermore, two species of the terrestrial family *Haemadipsidae* collected along the banks of the streams are identified as *Haemadipsa sylvestris* and *Haemadipsa zeylanica*.