## Field Visit - Mangrove Forest, Hamsaladeevi

## Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2025 Class: I, II & III B.Sc (Aquaculture & AZC)

On March 3, 2025, students from the Department of Aquaculture and Zoology's I, II, and III B.Sc., Aquaculture and AZC programs went on an academic study tour to the Hamsaladeevi Mangrove Forest. This unique ecosystem, situated at the confluence of the Bay of Bengal and the Krishna River, is an ecologically significant site.

The Hamsaladeevi Mangrove Forest is an integral part of the Krishna Wildlife Sanctuary, renowned for its rich biodiversity. It plays a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance by acting as a natural buffer against coastal erosion, providing habitat for diverse species, and supporting both marine and terrestrial life.

During the visit, students observed various flora and fauna unique to the mangrove ecosystem. Some of the notable species found in this region include:

- **Fishing Cat** (*Prionailurus viverrinus*): A rare and elusive wild feline adapted to wetland environments.
- Olive Ridley Turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*): A vulnerable sea turtle species known for their mass nesting behaviour.
- **Fiddler Crabs** (*Uca spp.*): Small crabs distinguished by their asymmetrical claws and striking red coloration.
- **Mudskippers** (*Periophthalmus spp.*): Amphibious fish capable of surviving both in water and on land.
- **Telescopium Snails** (*Telescopium telescopium*): Unique mollusks commonly found in mangrove habitats.
- Black-Capped Kingfisher (Halcyon pileata): A striking bird species recognized for its vibrant plumage.
- **Solomon Arab Butterfly** (*Colotis protractus*): A rare butterfly species contributing to the region's rich biodiversity.
- **Dolphins**: Occasionally spotted but in very limited numbers.

The study tour provided students with an immersive learning experience, deepening their understanding of the ecological significance of mangrove forests in coastal protection, biodiversity conservation, and ecosystem stability. Additionally, under the supervision of the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department, students actively participated in conservation efforts, including the safeguarding of turtle eggs.

Overall, the visit was highly informative, reinforcing the students' knowledge of aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems and underscoring the urgent need for conservation initiatives to protect these fragile environments.

