

Acknowledgements

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NOTE

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COLOUR PATTERN IN SCOLOPENDRID CENTIPEDES

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Centipedes display various colours in the field. Khanna and Yadav (1997) inventorised 15 species of centipedes under the genus *Scolopendra* Linn. from India. These include *S. morsitans* Linn., *S. subspinipes dehani* Brandt, *S. hardwickei* Newport, *S. amazonica* Bucherl, *S. valida* Lucas, *S. mazbii* Gravely, *S. andhrensensis* Jangi & Dass, *S. ellorensis* Jangi & Dass, *S. indiae* (Chamberlin), *S. occidentalis* (Attems), *S. mirabilis* (Porath), *S. nudus* (Jangi & Dass), *S. paranudus* (Khanna & Tripathi) S. Jangii Khanna & Yadav and *S. punensis* Jangi & Dass. Scolopendrid centipedes known to exhibit colour range of blue, green, brownish grey or combination of these.

While collecting the centipedes *Scolopendra amazonica*

Bucherl, just after rains in 1993, from various localities around Pune, it was observed that freshly collected specimens display faint reddish colour on tergites. This colour appeared prominent on 3rd to 5th tergites. Diminishing of natural body colour after preservation in rectified spirit appears to be a common phenomenon in scolopendrids. *S. amazonica* occurs sympatrically with *S. morsitans*, the former lacking tarsal spur to the 20th pair of walking legs. *S. hardwickei* Newport, showing comparatively rare occurrence exhibits brilliantly coloured alternate black and reddish yellow bands, a characteristic pattern of the species. Unlike other species, spines on the anal leg prefemur is absent in *S. hardwickei*. Further, *S. morsitans* is known to have uniform colour livery on its trunk viz. either blue, green or grey (Yadav, 1993).

Jangi and Dass (1984) recognised four groups among species of *Scolopendra*: Morsitans group represents *S. amazonica* and *S. morsitans*, Subspinipes group includes members *S. subspinipes*, *S. andhrensensis* and *S. punensis* while *S. ellorensis* and *S. hardwickei* deserve distinct lineage from the two groups.

It appears that observed faint reddish colour in live specimens of *S. amazonica* of the group 'morsitans' in addition to the probable camouflage effect under stones, shows affinity towards *S. hardwickei* group.

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