

COLOUR VARIATION IN THE CENTIPEDE *SCOLOPENDRA*
MORSITANS LINNAEUS (MYRIAPODA : CHILOPODA)
FROM MAHARASHTRA, INDIA

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The large, robust centipede *Scolopendra morsitans* Linn., occurs in different colours in Nagpur (Maharashtra) and Amritsar (Punjab) (Jangi, 1955). In the course of mopping survey of Raigad, Satara, Sholapur, Nasik, Dhulia and Jalgaon districts and local survey of Pune, Maharashtra, four distinct colour-morphs of *S. morsitans* Linn. are recorded by studying adult specimens (80-110 mm, in length) collected from 1973 to 1990, which is worth reporting.

1. *Faint blue* : It is a normal colour-pattern. The head, 1st and 2nd tergites and sternites are yellow, legs, reddish yellow and tergites 2-20 faint bluish.

Material examined : Pune, Wagholi, Dighi, Bhima-Koregaon, Katraj, Bhorghat, Nasik, Deola ; Satara Mhaswad, Dhuldeo ; Sholapur, Pandharpur, Gadegaon, Raigad, 65 km W of Khalapur, 22 exs. Drs. B. S. Lamba, A. S. Mahabal, Ramakrishna, D. B. Bastawde, M. B. Rao and R. M. Sharma, from the months of February to December.

2. *Dark bluish* : Of uniform dark blue colour from head to 21st tergite ; sternites and legs bluish yellow.

Material examined : Nasik, Vani, Athamble village, 1 ex. November, Dr. M. S. Pradhan.

3. *Dark green* : Head, 1st tergite and legs brownish yellow, tergites 2-20 dark green. One variety from Nasik (Karanjali), Dhulia and Jalgaon appeared green except sternites and legs.

Material examined : Sholapur, 6 km SE of Mohal on Sholapur-pune road, Nasik, Peth, 10 kms. of Karanjali, Nifad, Bokhadhar, Dharangaon ; Dhulia, Vanya Vihar, 6 kms. E of Talode ; Jalgaon, Erandol, Padmalay Forest ; 12 exs. ; Drs. A. S. Mahabal, D. B. Bastawde, M. B. Rao and R. H. Kamble ; collected in the months of February, August, October and December.

4. *Greenish grey* : Exceedingly flat forms, exhibiting uniform greenish grey colour ; Sternites and legs greyish yellow.

Material examined : Dhulia, Acrani, 15 kms. S. of Dhadgaon, Taloda road ;

Shahada, Donergaon, Aslad road ; 3 exs ; Drs. R. M. Sharma and A. S. Mahabal, in January and July.

The colour variations among *S. morsitans* Linn. are prominent but fades in the preservative in course of time. In the phena of divergent colours all but two were males. This may have adaptive significance. A careful identification (Jangi & Dass 1984) avoids colour confusion.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the Director, Zoological Survey of India, Calcutta, to Dr. G. M. Yazdani, Scientist 'SE', O/C Western Regional Station, Pune, and to Dr. S. G. Patil, Asstt. Zool. for providing the laboratory facilities.

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