

FIRST REPORT ON THE CENTIPEDES COLLECTED FROM
UTTAR PRADESH TERAJ, INDIA (CHILOPODA : SCOLOPENDRIDAE)

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ABSTRACT

Present paper deals with the seven species of Scolopendrid centipedes collected during mopping up survey of Lakhimpur Kheri and Pilibhit districts of U. P. Terai, India.

INTRODUCTION

As a sequel to the policy of the Department to conduct 'mopping up survey' of the fauna of U. P. Terai, India, the authors made their first centipede hunt in the distts Lakhimpur Kheri and Pilibhit during February-March 1984, and Second in March, 1985.

Centipede fauna of India in general and Uttar Pradesh, in particular has received very little attention after Attems (1930). Recently Khanna and Kumar (1984) have given an annotated list of Indian species of Scolopendrid centipedes, alongwith the centipede fauna of Western Himalayas, U. P. None of the species, so far known from the Indian continent, had been reported from U. P. Terai except *Scolopendra morsitans* Linn. which has a cosmopolitan status of distribution.

During the present survey 96 examples of scolopendrid centipedes have been collected and are referrible to four genera and seven

species, out of which 5 species are a new record from the region and one *R. I. lithobiodes*, a new addition to the Indian Scolopendrid fauna.

Terai (or Tarai) (i.e. "Moist Land") the name given to the strip of formerly marshy land stretching parallel to lower Himalayas in the Northern India. It extends roughly from Jamuna (Yamuna) river on the west to Brahmaputra, in the east, and a large portion of it lies in Nepal. The name is also officially used for subdivision of Nainital district, in Uttar Pradesh. At its northern edge, where the often riverless forest tract of "bhabar" (coarse gravel deposits) ends, a series of springs burst from the surface and these increasing and uniting in their progress, forms the numerous streams that intersect the Terai and were responsible for its marshy character. The Gagra (Ghagra) is the great river of the Terai proper and is navigable from the Himalayas Foot Hills. Terai in

Bengal (both west and northern part of Bangla Desh) is known as 'Duars'. (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 21, p. 860).

Terai, in Uttar Pradesh comprises of eight

districts viz. Gorakhpur, Bahraich, Gonda, Lakhimpur Kheri, Pilibhit, Sitapur, Basti, and Deoria, in addition to lower parts of district Nainital.

Collection data :

Sl. no.	Date	Place	Dist.	No. of Exs.	Remarks
1.	10.3.1984	Vill. Ramapura	Lakhimpur Kheri	40	Old Brick Kiln
2.	11.3.1984	"	"	20	"
3.	13.3.1984	Vill. Chhachu	"	1	"
4.	12.3.1984	Sitapur Road	"	16	"
5.	22.2.1984	Berreilly Rd.	Pilibhit	4	under stones
6.	23.2.1984	"	"	9	"
7.	27.2.1984	Kasua (Puranpur)	"	4	2

All J. C. Tripathi Coll.

1. **Scolopendra amazonica** (Bucherl), 1946

*Material examined : 1(2)

Remarks : A controversial species, widely distributed, occurring sympatrically with *S. morsitans* Linn. The validity of this species has been experimentally proved, by Lewis (1966, 1969 and 1970) and systematically advocated by Jangi (1955 and 1959) but taxonomically rejected by Wurmli (1975). However, Jangi and Dass (1984) still regard it as a separate species. The present authors have collected only one specimen of this species, which is characterised, and separated from *morsitans*, by the absence of a tarsal spur on 20th pair of walking legs, from dist. Lakhimpur Kheri, U. P. Terai, for the first time.

2. **Scolopendra morsitans** Linnaeus, 1758

Material examined : 3(2) ; 7(3).

The only species that was already on

record from U. P. Terai (Gravelly, 1910) from dist. Gorakhpur, is now collected from dist. Lakhimpur Kheri.

Distribution : Cosmopolitan.

3. **Cormocephalus dentipes** Pocock, 1891

Material examined : 35(1) ; 11(2) ; 1(3) ; 16(4) ; 5(6) and 4(7).

Cormocephalus dentipes is a dark purplish black endemic species (Type Locality : Bengal) redescribed by Jangi and Dass (1980), now finds its range extended to U. P. Terai.

Note : Recovery of 72 examples of *C. dentipes*, by the authors from U. P. Terai, during the month of Feb-March 1984, again confirms the authors observation on seasonal incidence within the genus *Cormocephalus* (Khanna and Tripathi, 1984).

Distribution : West Bengal : Calcutta & Parasnath ; Delhi ; U. P. Himalayas : Pauri, Nainital and Dehradun ; U. P. Terai ; Pilibhit and Lakhimpur Kheri distt. ; Madhya

* figures outside brackets under material examined denote the number of examples studied and those within parentheses are the serial numbers of locality of collection tabulated above.

Pradesh ; Balaghat ; Orissa : Koenjhar and Phulbani distt.

4. **Rhysida nuda immarginata** (Porat), 1876

Material examined : 1(1) ; 1(2) ; and Chautora Vill., Gonda Road, Bahraich dist, 22.iii.85, 1 ex ; J. C. Tripathi, Coll.

A polytypic species *R. nuda* found throughout the tropical world, is not confined in India, only to Western Ghats in Deccan as stated by Jangi and Dass (l. c.) but way back in 1910, Gravely recorded it from U. P. and Bengal ; and from Andaman Isls by Ahmed (1980). Now the present authors record subspecies *R. n. immarginata* from U. P. Terai for the first time.

Distribution : West Bengal : Darjeeling, Punkhabari, Calcutta, Jessore : and Nareil ; Andaman Isls ; Assam : Sureil ; U. P. : Nainital and Chamoli (Gowcher) ; U. P. Terai, Lakhimpur Kheri, Bahraich.

5. **Rhysida longipes longipes** (Newport), 1845

Material examined : 2(4) ; 4(5) ; 3(6).

A cosmopolitan species, recorded for the first time from U. P. Terai, India.

Distribution : Madhya Pradesh : Durg dist. ; Maharashtra : Amrawati and Nagpur ; Karnataka : Kumta and Coondapur ; Goa, West Bengal ; Calcutta ; Andaman Isls ; U. P. Plains : Lucknow, Ranigunge ; U. P. Terai ; Lakhimpur Kheri and Pilibhit.

6. **Rhysida lithobiodes lithobiodes** (Newport), 1845

Material examined : 1(6).

Of the 5 known subspecies of *R. lithobiodes* (Newport) viz. *R. l. paucidens*, *R. l. abey-*

ssinica, *R. l. longopito*, *R. l. trispinosus* and *R. l. lithobiodes* only two were, so far, reported to occur in India. The present studies reveals the occurrence of *R. l. lithobiodes*, hitherto unknown from India, now from dist. Pilibhit, U. P. Terai, India.

Distribution : India, China, Burma.

7. **Otostigmus ruficeps** Pocock 1890

Material examined : 1(2).

Hitherto known only from Tamil Nadu (Madras), now collected from Dist. Lakhimpur Kheri.

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