Acknowledgements
The first author (RM) is grateful to the Director, Zoological Survey of India, Calcutta, for the grant of a Senior Research Fellowship for this study. We are also thankful to Mr. C. Radhakrishnan (Officer-in-charge, ZSI, Western Ghats Regional Station, Calicut) and to Dr. P.M. Sureshan (ZSI) for kindly giving the specimen for our study. Thanks are also due to the authorities of University of Calicut, for the facilities provided.

References

NOTE
ZOOS' PRINT JOURNAL 14(8): 96

COLOUR PATTERN IN SCOLOPENDRID CENTIPEDES
B.E. Yadav
Zoological Survey of India, Western Regional Station, Sector 29, Vithapur, Akurdi, Pune, Maharashtra 411044, India

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. morisitans Linn., S. subspinipes dehani Brandt, S. hardwickei Newport, S. amazonica Bucherl, S. valida Lucas, S. mabii Gravely, S. andreensis Jangi & Dass, S. ellorensis Jangi & Dass, S. indiae (Chamberlin), S. occidentalis (Attems), S. mirabilis (Porath), S. madras (Jangi & Dass), S. parasudus (Khanna & Tripathi) S. jangii Khanna & Yadav and S. punensis Jangi & Dass. Scolopendrid centipedes known to exhibit colours range of blue, green, brownish grey or combination of these.

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. morisitans, 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. morisitans 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: Morisitans group represents S. amazonica and S. morisitans. Subspinipes group includes members S. subspinipes, S. andreensis 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 ‘moritans’ in addition to the probable camouflage effect under stones, shows affinity towards S. hardwickei group.

Acknowledgements
I am grateful to the Director, Zoological Survey of India, Calcutta, and to Dr. M.S. Pradhan, Scientist SE, Officer-in-charge, Zoological Survey of India, Western Regional Station, Pune, for the facilities. I am thankful to Dr. D.B. Bastawade, Assistant Zoologist, for critically going through the manuscript.

References

While collecting the centipedes Scolopendra amazonica

Received 30 March 1999; Accepted 1 June 1999

ZOOS' PRINT JOURNAL, Volume XIV, Number 8, August 1999