

A Centipede (*Scolopendra subspinipes*) Feeding on its own juveniles

Amit Sayyed^{1*}, Soham Karjulkar², Amol Varande³, Yash Solanke⁴, Nikhil Guhagharkar⁵, Om Jadhav⁶ and Dipraj Pawar⁷

^{1 to 7} Wildlife Protection and Research Society (WLP RS), 40, Rajaspura Peth, Near Police Headquarter Satara, Maharashtra – 415002, India; <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1244-7809>.

Corresponding email: amitsayyedsatara@gmail.com

Date of Submission: 27-10-2022

Date of Acceptance: 08-11-2022

Centipedes are predatory, terrestrial arthropods and are found primarily in tropics, they are relatives of the insects. The name “centipede” literally means 100 legs, and without a doubt some species of centipedes have almost 100 legs. Centipedes can be identified by their long, segmented body with each segment bearing one pair of legs. Centipedes are predators; they feed on any small crawling organisms they can catch. Centipedes are seen in a range of habitats but typically they can be found in moist, secluded places such as under stones, under logs, leaves or bark.

There are few genus among them *Scolopendra* is the giant centipede, may also be common in parts of northern Western Ghats of India. Among all the centipedes, *Scolopendra* is considered to be the most dangerous because of its venomous fangs and aggressive behavior.

Centipedes of the genus *Scolopendra* are active predators, feeding mostly on insects and other invertebrates. Larger specimens have been observed preying on frogs, tarantulas, lizards, birds, snakes, rodents, and even bats (Hardy 1957; Barr and Norton 1965; Gillette and Kimbrough 1970; Hopkins and Hopkins 1982; Rodríguez and Reagan 1984; Rodríguez-Durán and Lewis 1985; Rodríguez-Durán 1996; Hutterer and Ray 1997; Souza et al. 1997; Sparks et al. 2000 and Molinari et al. 2005). However, there is no records of cannibalism in *Scolopendra* has been recorded yet.

Here in this study we are reporting the cannibalism in the genus *Scolopendra*. On 27th October 2022 at 13.45hrs on a call of snake rescue the team of Wildlife Protection and Research Society got the opportunity to record this activity of *Scolopendra sp.* rescuers were trying to find the snake at the backyard of the house at Umbarle village, Dapoli, Ratnagiri, however centipede fell from one of the log while searching under the logs lying there, it was carrying group of juveniles with her; due to a sudden event two juveniles (Image 1 and 2) fell from her stomach; it seems she was trying to search something around her, but suddenly she grabbed and started eating them, immediate after she went under a nearby stone. The entire incident was recorded on video.

Further, species of centipede was confirmed by first author. *Scolopendra subspinipes* is widespread species of the centipedes. Yet, there is no record of cannibalism in this species has been reported from India. There is need to conduct studies to know ecology of centipedes of India.



Image 1. *Scolopendra subspinipes* feeding on its own juvenile



Image 2. *Scolopendra subspinipes* feeding on its own juvenile

References

- [1]. Barr, T. C., Jr., and R. M. Norton. 1965. Predation on cave bats by the pilot snake. *J. Mammal.* 46:672.
- [2]. Gillette, D. D., and J. D. Kimbrough. 1970. Chiropteran mortality. In *About bats*, ed. B. H. Slaughter, and D. W. Walton, pp. 262-283. Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press.
- [3]. Hopkins, H. C., and M. J. G. Hopkins. 1982. Predation by a snake of a flower-visiting bat at *Parkia nitida* (Leguminosae Mimosoideae). *Brittonia* 34: 225-227.
- [4]. J. Molinari., E. E. Gutiérrez., A. A. de Ascensão., J. M. Nassar., A. Arends., and R. J. Márquez. 2005. "Predation by giant centipedes, *Scolopendra gigantea*, on three species of bats in a Venezuelan cave". *Caribbean Journal of Science.* 41 (2): 340–346.
- [5]. Hardy, J. D. 1957. Bat predation by the Cuban boa, *Epicrates angulifer*. *Copeia* 1957:151-152.
- [6]. Hutterer, R., and J. C. Ray. 1997. Bat predation by small carnivores in a central African rainforest. *Z. Saugetierkd.* 62:86-92.
- [7]. Molinari, J., E. E. Gutierrez, A. A. DE Ascencao, J. M. Nassar, A. Arends, and R. J. Marquez. 2005. Predation by Giant Centipedes, *Scolopendra gigantea*, on Three Species of Bats in a Venezuelan Cave. *Caribbean Journal of Science*, Vol. 41, No. 2, 340-346
- [8]. Rodríguez, G. A., and D. P. Reagan. 1984. Bat predation by the Puerto Rican boa, *Epicrates inornatus*. *Copeia* 1984:219-220.
- [9]. Rodríguez-Durán, A., and A. R. Lewis. 1985. Seasonal predation by merlins on sooty mustached bats in western Puerto Rico. *Biotropica* 17:71-74.
- [10]. Rodríguez-Durán, A. 1996. Foraging ecology of the Puerto Rican boa: bat predation, carrion feeding, and piracy. *J. Herpetol.* 30:533-536.
- [11]. Souza, L. L., S. F. Ferrari, and A. L. Pina. 1997. Feeding behaviour and predation of a bat by *Saimiri sciureus* in a semi-natural Amazonian environment. *Folia Primatol.* 68:194-198.
- [12]. Sparks, D. W., K. J. Roberts, and C. Jones. 2000. Vertebrate predators on bats in North America North of Mexico. In *Reflections of a Naturalist: Papers Honoring Professor Eugene D. Fleharty*, ed. J. R. Choate, pp. 229-241. Hays, Kansas: Fort Hays Studies, Special Issue 1

Amit Sayyed, et. al. "A Centipede (*Scolopendra subspinipes*) Feeding on its own juveniles." *IOSR Journal of Environmental Science, Toxicology and Food Technology (IOSR-JESTFT)*, 16(11), (2022): pp 01-02.